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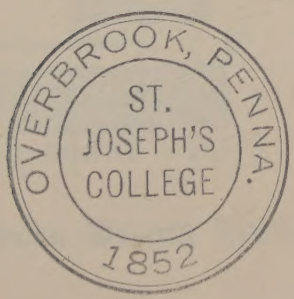

REPRESENTATIVE AMERICAN PLAYS

From 1880 to the Present Day

125

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

BY

ARTHUR HOBSON QUINN
University of Pennsylvania

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PREFACE

In order to meet a growing need, in connection with classes in modern rama, for a collection of American plays which represent exclusively the later eriod, *Representative American Plays* is now issued in two forms. For those ho wish to study the development of our play-writing in its completeness, the mplete collection, containing twenty-seven plays, will be available in a fourth id revised edition. Where American drama is studied in a shorter time, or here it is discussed as part of the general subject of modern drama, students ay begin in 1880 with *Hazel Kirke,* as an example of the trend toward real-m. They will find in this Modern Drama Edition thirteen plays illustrating ie progress of play-writing in America from Steele MacKaye to Eugene 'Neill. In domestic drama the advance from *Hazel Kirke* to *Beyond the Hori-on* and *Sun-Up* is clearly shown; the play in which the study of character and ction is set against the background of war is seen in *Shenandoah* and *Secret ervice;* the exotic romance of *Madame Butterfly* may be contrasted with the mance of the supernatural in *The Scarecrow;* the social comedy is seen at its est in *The New York Idea;* the drama of international relations is represented y *Her Great Match;* the study of the occult finds expression in *The Witching Hour* and the study of spiritual revolt in *The Faith Healer,* while *The Boss* epresents the play of business and politics and *He and She* the relations of usband and wife whose artistic ambitions make them rivals.

The plays, Introductions, and General Bibliography in the Modern Drama dition are identical with those in the fourth and revised edition of the complete ollection. The Introductions, which contain all necessary biographical and ibliographical details, have been brought up to date, in the cases of living laywrights, whom the editor thanks once more for their cordial coöperation in aking the book authentic. To the General Bibliography have been added the ost significant publications since the appearance of the last revised edition.

A. H. Q.

niversity of Pennsylvania,
pril, 1928.

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HAZEL KIRKE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

Steele MacKaye

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[In Renewal]

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HAZEL KIRKE

Hazel Kirke represents the domestic drama of the late seventies, and the work of a singularly interesting pioneer in the dramatic and theatrical history of this country. (James) Steele MacKaye was born June 6, 1842, at Fort Porter, in Buffalo, New York. His father, Colonel James M. MacKaye, a prominent lawyer and art connoisseur, was an abolitionist and a friend of Garrison, Emerson, and Lincoln. As a lad, Steele MacKaye studied art first at Newport under William Hunt in 1858 and 1859 and later in Paris in the Ecole des Beaux Arts and under Gérome, Coûture, and others. The Civil War brought him back to this country and he served for eighteen months, in the Seventh Regiment of New York and then in Colonel Burney's regiment, where he had the rank of Major. Illness compelling his retirement, he went again to Paris, and here, while executing commissions as an expert buyer of paintings, he became interested in photo-sculpture and afterwards introduced it into this country. On his return to Paris in 1869 he met François Delsarte and became his disciple in his classes in expression. The war of 1870 broke up this occupation and he returned to America where by lecturing on the principles of Delsarte, he secured funds with which he aided his master who had been ruined by the war. His initial lecture given in Boston, March 21, 1871, marks an epoch in our theatrical history, since his gospel was that of quiet natural force in expression as opposed to the artificial, over-emphatic style of the day. To express these ideas further he appeared on the stage in New York at the St. James Theatre, January 8, 1872, in his adaptation of Washington Allston's novel *Monaldi,* in which Francis Durivage was his collaborator. His success was real in all but financial return, and worn out with his first efforts as a manager he returned to Paris, studying and acting in French at the Conservatoire, under Régnier, where he played "Hamlet" among other parts and then going to England, where he became acquainted with Charles Reade and Tom Taylor. Under the latter's management, he acted "Hamlet" from May 3, 1873, to August of the same year in London and the provinces. After that, except for occasional benefits he acted only in his own plays, his most important parts being "Dunstan Kirke," "Arthur Carringford" and "Aaron Rodney" in *Hazel Kirke,* "Paul Kauvar" and "Duroc" in *Paul Kauvar,* and "John Fleming" in *Won at Last.*

Steele MacKaye's work as a teacher was of great significance. He founded and conducted four schools of expression, the most important being the Lyceum Theatre School in New York which began in 1884. This school, through Mac-

Kaye's association with the Frohmans and Mr. David Belasco, had a strong influence on the future of the stage, while his direct influence on his many pupils is hard properly to estimate. As an organizer and stage manager he had to his credit two theatres, numerous theatrical companies, and the Spectatorium at Chicago in 1893. He built the Madison Square Theatre and the Lyceum Theatre in New York, modeling the former on the Théâtre Français, and hoping to bring together a permanent company of artists. He planned also to pay properly the dramatists who were to write plays for his company. Yet, so careless was he in financial dealings, that his contract with the capitalists who controlled the theatre gave him but a salary of $5,000 yearly and he shared in none of the profits of *Hazel Kirke,* which amounted to $200,000 in two years. His final achievement as an organizer and director was the Spectatorium in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair in 1893, a great project which failed owing to the financial crisis of that summer. In this immense auditorium he was planning to produce *The World Finder,* a "Spectatorio" based on the Columbus story. He died February 25, 1894, having lived to see some of his ideas vindicated on a smaller scale in the production of a working model of the original plan, known as the Scenitorium, on February 5, 1894.

As a dramatist, Steele MacKaye represents the transition from the older theatrical tradition to the newer realism. His work was not by any means free from the older devices, but there is a decided advance in the naturalness of the characters and in the quietude of expression. His acted plays were as follows:

Monaldi, with Francis Durivage, first produced at the St. James Theatre, New York, January 8, 1872; *Marriage,* adapted from the French of Octave Feuillet's *Julie,* first produced at the St. James Theatre, New York, February 12, 1872; *Arkwright's Wife,* with Tom Taylor, first produced at the Theatre Royal, Leeds, England, July 7, 1873; *Rose Michel,* based on the French of Ernest Blum, produced for the first time at the Union Square Theatre, New York, November 23, 1875; *Queen and Woman,* with J. V. Pritchard, first produced at the Brooklyn Theatre, Brooklyn, New York, February 14, 1876; *Twins,* with A. C. Wheeler, produced for the first time at Wallack's Theatre, New York, April 12, 1876; *Won at Last,* produced at Wallack's Theatre, New York, December 10, 1877; *Through the Dark,* produced for the first time at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, March 10, 1879; *An Iron Will,* produced for the first time at Low's Opera House, Providence, Rhode Island, October 27, 1879; its revision, *Hazel Kirke,* produced for the first time at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, February 4, 1880; *A Fool's Errand,* a dramatization of Judge Tourgee's novel, first produced at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, October 26, 1881; *Dakolar,* based on Georges Ohnet's *Le Maître de Forges,* first produced at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, April 6, 1885; *In Spite of All,* a play based on Sardou's *Andrea,* first produced at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, September 15, 1885; *Rienzi,* based

on Bulwer Lytton's novel of the same name, first performed at Albaugh's Opera House, Washington, December 13, 1886; *The Drama of Civilization,* a pageant from W. F. Cody's "Wild West," first performed at the Madison Square Garden, New York, November 27, 1887; *Anarchy,* first performed at the Academy of Music, Buffalo, New York, May 30, 1887, and afterward revised as *Paul Kauvar,* at the Standard Theatre, New York, December 24, 1887; *A Noble Rogue,* first performed at the Chicago Opera House, Chicago, Illinois, July 3, 1888; *An Arrant Knave,* first produced at the Chicago Opera House, Chicago, Illinois, September 30, 1889; *Colonel Tom,* first produced at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, Mass., January 20, 1890; *Money Mad,* first produced at the Standard Theatre, New York, April 7, 1890 a revision of *Through the Dark* and *A Noble Rogue.*

Of these nineteen plays, none was an utter failure, nearly all were successes in their day, and three, *Hazel Kirke, Won at Last,* and *Paul Kauvar,* were played for years in stock. *Hazel Kirke* was written in the town of Dublin, New Hampshire, where Steele MacKaye spent the summers of 1878 and 1879. The heroine's name was suggested by the sprigs of hazel boughs nearby. It was first played under the title of *An Iron Will.* It had been the intention of its author to present it at the Madison Square Theatre, but owing to delay in the completion of that theatre it was first produced in Providence, Rhode Island, October 27, 1879, and taken on tour through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and other cities. On February 4, 1880, the play was put on at the Madison Square Theatre under the present name, and ran consecutively for about two years. It has continued on the stage for thirty years and in America has been acted at the same time by ten companies. It has been produced in England, Australia, Japan, Hawaii, and elsewhere. Its success has been due to its human quality, and to the fact that it appeals to the primary instincts. It was noteworthy in the absence of "the stage villain"—the incidents were developed naturally, and it points forward in our stage technique.

Hazel Kirke was privately printed in 1880 and has been reprinted by Samuel French. For permission to reprint the play, the editor is indebted to the courtesy of Mrs. Steele MacKaye who, with her son, Mr. Percy MacKaye, has carefully collated the two editions, and prepared a definitive text and furnished valuable biographical and critical information.

Note to Fourth Edition.

In *Epoch: The Life of Steele MacKaye,* 2 vols. (1927), Percy Mackaye has written an authoritative biography of Steele MacKaye, which is also a picture of the American theatre of his time.

The original cast of *Hazel Kirke,* as first produced at the Madison Square Theatre, New York City, February 4th, 1880

HAZEL KIRKE

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts, written expressly for this Theatre

by

STEELE MACKAYE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Hazel Kirke	Miss Effie Ellsler
Dolly Dutton	Miss Gabrielle Du Sauld
Emily Carringford [Lady Travers]	Mrs. Cecil Rush
Mercy Kirke	Mrs. Thomas Whiffen
Clara, a maid	Miss Annie Ellsler
Arthur Carringford [Lord Travers]	Mr. Eben Plympton
Dunstan Kirke	Mr. C. W. Couldock
Aaron Rodney	Mr. Dominick Murray
Pittacus Green	Mr. Thomas Whiffen
Methuselah Miggins [called Met]	Mr. Joseph Frankau
Barney O'Flynn, a valet	Mr. Edward Coleman
Joe, a miller	Mr. Fred P. Barton
Dan, a miller	Mr. George Grey
Thomas, a servant	Mr. Henry Jones

Millers, Servants, etc.

ACT I.—Scene.—Exterior of Blackburn Mill.
ACT II.—Scene.—A boudoir in the villa of Fairy Grove.
ACT III.—Scene.—Kitchen of Blackburn Mill. Night.
ACT IV.—Scene.—Kitchen of Blackburn Mill. Morning.

100th performance, May 11, 1880.
300th performance November 29, 1880.
Withdrawn May 31, 1881, after 486 consecutive performances.

HAZEL KIRKE

ACT FIRST.

SCENE. *Exterior of* DUNSTAN KIRKE'S *mill. At right, exterior of house, opening into courtyard; at left, a large gateway. Walls to courtyard covered with vines; view of mill-wheel in background. Down right, a bench; down left, a rustic table and two chairs; a pile of empty bags up stage center; broom in porch; piano visible within. As curtain rises, Joe is discovered marking bags; miller boys cross behind the wall, with bags of grain on their shoulders.*

DUNSTAN. (*Inside.*) Now, then, Dan, you dolt—more bags! Be off, boys!

DAN. (*Appearing behind wall, to* JOE.) More bags—more bags for market.

JOE. Drat it. Give me time to mark 'em, can't ye?

DAN. Oh! I don't care how long ye take—but old man Kirke is gettin' into one of his tempers.

JOE. Oh! His tempers be hanged! I'm doin' my best—no man can do more. (MET. *is heard outside playing a pipe.*) There's that young ne'er-do-weel, Methusaleh Miggins, blowing that frightful pipe o' his again!

DAN. Aye, and he's always a-blowin' it. By the way, wherever did Maister Kirke find the creature?

JOE. He was left on Maister Kirke's hands by some help he had, who had the impudence to die, and leave this baby for maister to take care on. He growed up the mischievous booby ye see him—and nobody can do nothin' wi' him.

DAN. Except Mistress Hazel Kirke. She can manage him wi' a look.

DUNSTAN. (*Outside.*) Hi there! Are ye never coomin' wi' those bags?

DAN. There goes the miller. Hoorry, man! or we'll all be killed.

JOE. (*Handing bags to him.*) Here, take these and coom back for more.

DUNSTAN. (*Outside.*) Will ye bring those bags, ye lazy dolts?

DAN. (*Running off.*) Aye, aye—I'm coomin'. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* MERCY.)

MERCY. (*Calls.*) Dolly! Dolly, child!

DOLLY. (*Inside.*) Aye, aye, aunt.

MERCY. Hoorry! Bring the bundles for market into the courtyard, lass.

(*Millers appear with bags on their shoulders.*)

DAN. (*Rushing in.*) Bags! More bags, Joe!

JOE. (*Handing bags.*) Here ye are, I'll bring the rest myself.

(*Takes up bags; passes through gateway behind wall, and disappears right.*)

MERCY. (*Impatiently.*) Dolly! Dolly, lass—what's keepin' ye?

DOLLY. (*Entering with bundles.*) Here I am, Aunt Mercy.

MERCY. Has thee got the homespun, lass?

DOLLY. Aye—here 't is, bundled and ready to go.

MERCY. That's a good child. Here, tie it up wi' the rest o' these.

DOLLY. (*Tying bundles.*) La, Aunt Mercy! Is Uncle Kirke going to take all these to market wi' him?

MERCY. Aye, girl—times be hard, and money must be had for Hazel's wedding-day.

DOLLY. Hazel's wedding day!

MERCY. Aye, child, that 'll soon be now. Her father has decided that Hazel must marry Squire Rodney within three months.

DOLLY. Oh! How I hate that Squire Rodney!

MERCY. Hate him? What for, pray?

DOLLY. For stealing our Hazel away from her happiness.

MERCY. What dost mean, girl?

DOLLY. You're going to make Hazel marry Squire Rodney for gratitude, but it won't do, Aunt Mercy—Gratitude is not the stuff to make a happy marriage of.

MERCY. Peace, lass—peace!

DOLLY. La, Aunt Mercy! Thee 'd say peace to the wicked one himself, if he were here.

MERCY. I think he be here indeed, Dolly—in thy temper.

DOLLY. Temper! Well, who has a better right to a temper:—my mother was thy

husband's sister, and all the world knows that Dunstan Kirke has the worst temper in all Lancashire!

DUNSTAN (*Outside, in rage.*) Coom! Coom! off wi' ye—don't lollop around here all day! (*Millers cross as before, with bags, followed by* DUNSTAN.) Hoorry to market, and don't loaf, for I'll be after ye wi' the young colt, as fast as ever I can.

(*He goes out after them behind the wall.*)

MERCY. Is everything here, Dolly?

DOLLY. Aye, all I had to get.

DUNSTAN. (*Outside, left.*) Here! here, I say! Stand round and make them things right. So—and—so and so—don't ye see?

DOLLY. Talk of tempers—listen to Uncle Kirke, raging like a maddened bull.

MET. (*Flying across.*) Hi! look out, he's comin'! (*Exit.*)

DUNSTAN. (*Entering excitedly.*) Drat 'em! drat 'em, I say! They're enough to make a divil o' a saint, so they are!

MERCY. (*Soothingly.*) There, there, dear heart, have patience, patience.

DUNSTAN. Patient! I am patient—patient as an angel.—Confound 'em. It's taken me all day to get 'em off. (HAZEL *sings outside. As he listens,* DUNSTAN'S *anger passes away, and he sinks into a chair near the table.*) Ah! that does me good! that does me good! My Hazel's a lass, bless her, to gladden a feyther's heart: as modest as a girl should be, and as fine-mannered and accomplished as any lady i' the land.

(*Enter* RODNEY, *left, with samples of grain.*)

MERCY. Yes, she's well eddicated, now.

DUNSTAN. Thanks to Squire Rodney, God bless him. 'T was he got her the larnin'.

DOLLY. And he'll be well paid for it too, when she's his wife.

DUNSTAN. Weel, that'll soon be now—that'll soon be now.

(MERCY *and* DOLLY *go in the house.*)

RODNEY. (*Advancing.*) I'm not so sure of that.

DUNSTAN. Ah! Maister Rodney, I do declare, here at last! An' what's that ye're not so sure on?

RODNEY. (*Sits at left of table.*) That Hazel will ever be my wife.

DUNSTAN. (*Seated at right.*) Not be thy wife! Why, man, what's coom to thee, man, to say so strange a word? Did n't ye save me from ruin, and the whole mill from changin' hands, seven year ago, and did n't Hazel promise then to be your wife, and did n't ye send her off to school, that she might learn to be the lady o' Rodney Hall?

RODNEY. True, Dunstan, but she was only fourteen then, and I in my forties; but I forgot that when she came of age I'd be fifty and growing old. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, ye know.

DUNSTAN. Why! whatever do ye mean, man?

RODNEY. Why, I mean accidents may happen, and a young girl's heart may change.

DUNSTAN. Oh! no, no!

RODNEY. Ever since you saved young Carringford from drowning, and brought him in here, I've noticed a change in Hazel's manner to me. You don't look with my eyes, Dunstan, you don't see what I see.

DUNSTAN. And what dost see, sir?

RODNEY. I see a fine, handsome, brave young man lying ill and helpless; I see a lovely young girl waiting upon him, nursing him back to life; I see two young hearts looking at each other through young eyes; talking to each other with young tongues; touching each other with young hands, and—well, Dunstan, I know what this must come to soon.

DUNSTAN. Maister Rodney, there is a holy book, that my bairn reads to us every day. Dost think that she can ever forget that the book commands us to keep our faith?

RODNEY. Ah! Dunstan, when the heart speaks, all other voices are dumb.

DUNSTAN. (*Rising.*) A promise be a promise! (*Striking the table.*) If my child were to break her word, I'd drive her out as I would a scorpion on my hearth. Everybody knows the metal I'm made on. What I say, I'll do. (*He strikes the table again.*) And I tell thee now, Aaron Rodney, that this day three months Hazel Kirke shall be thy wife.

HAZEL. (*Outside.*) Thanks, I've found them—I'll go myself.

RODNEY. (*Rising.*) Hush! That's her voice, she's coming! Not a word of my fears to her!

DUNSTAN. Oh! That's all right.

HAZEL. (*Entering, porch, right, goes to* DUNSTAN.) Here, father, are some let-

ters I want you to post. You won't forget?

DUNSTAN. Nothing that thee can ask, lass—not while thy face shines as bright wi' innocence as it does now! But look, child, there's Maister Rodney, child.

(*Enter* MERCY *and* DOLLY.)

HAZEL. Good-morning, Mr. Rodney.
(*She gives her hand.*)

DUNSTAN. Nay, lass, don't mind us, give him a kiss—a good, hearty, honest girl's kiss.

HAZEL. (*Laughing.*) That's something I never refused him yet. (RODNEY *kisses her; she turns to* MERCY.) Now, mother, have you given father the list of things you want?

MERCY. Not yet, lass—sit down and write it for him.

(HAZEL *sits at table and writes.*)

DUNSTAN. (*To* RODNEY.) Well, now, what girl could have given a franker kiss than that?

RODNEY. Aye, Dunstan, 't was frank enough; 't was frank enough.

DUNSTAN. To be sure it was.

HAZEL. (*Going to* DUNSTAN.) Here, father, is the list of things for you to get.

DUNSTAN. A' reet, girl. Now, wife, where's the stuff for me to take to market?

(*All begin to load him with things.*)

DOLLY. Here's the rags and the hose.

MERCY. And here's the homespun.

RODNEY. And here are my samples of grain.

HAZEL. And here are my letters. Be sure you don't forget the list!

DUNSTAN. No, girl, I shan't forget anything. I am not the forgettin' kind. (*Going, stops and turns.*) Ah! I'm forgettin' one thing now, to ask after Maister Carringford. How is he this mornin', lass?

HAZEL. Better, I think.

DUNSTAN. Ah! he better be. He's been here more nor a month. He's a long time a-gettin' well.

HAZEL. But think how horribly he was hurt! (*Exit* RODNEY.)

DUNSTAN. Aye, but I've seen older bones sooner mended. It's time he were well and off to his work; this is no place for idle hands. Give him a hint, girl—and here, my darling, gi' me a partin' kiss. (*He kisses her.*) God be wi' ye, child, and keep ye always the blessin' that ye are. (*Exit.*)

HAZEL. (*Sitting.*) Ah! thank heaven! he cannot see the wickedness in my wretched, wretched heart.

JOE. (*Outside.*) Get out of this!

MET. (*Outside.*) Hi! Hold on! take that! (*A crash is heard.*)

HAZEL. (*Starting.*) What's that?

DOLLY. Oh! another row between Joe and Met.

HAZEL. Joe is always abusing poor Met.
(*Cries are heard outside.*)

(MET *rushes in.*)

MET. (*Hiding behind* HAZEL.) Save me! save me!

(JOE *enters.*)

JOE. (*With a stick.*) Where is he? Let me get at him.

HAZEL. No, no, you shall not touch him.

JOE. (*In rage.*) I will, and no woman shall stop me!

MET. (*Squaring off.*) Come on, Joe! I'd rather fight than blow my pipe.

DOLLY. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha! The boy has found a bit of pluck at last.

HAZEL. (*Soothingly.*) Let him alone. There, there, Joe, let him alone; no more of this—leave him to me, and I'll punish him for you.

MET. I'd rather be punished by you, missus, than petted by a' the rest.

HAZEL. Well, then, come with me.

MET. (*Suspiciously.*) Are ye goin' to Maister Carringford?

HAZEL. Why do you ask that?

MET. Because if ye are, I won't go.—I hate him!

HAZEL. Hate him? What for?

MET. Because you love him so.

HAZEL. (*Severely.*) How dare you say that?

MET. Because it's true.

HAZEL. (*With mock severity, extending her hand.*) Met, come with me this instant, sir.

MET. Where?

HAZEL. To pick some flowers.

MET. Oh! then I'll go, mistress—then I'll go. (*He takes her hand, turns at gate, bahs at* JOE, *and goes out with* HAZEL. JOE *starts after him.*)

DOLLY. (*Holding* JOE *back.*) Oh! never mind that fellow. Come, come, Joe—I want you to help me bring my things out here.—It's cooler working here than inside.

JOE. (*Going with her.*) All right, Miss

Dolly, show me the things you want.
(*They go into the house.*)

(*Enter* BARNEY, *followed by* DAN.)

DAN. Here 's the house and this be the mill ye 're askin' after. (*Exit.*)

BARNEY. Thankee! thankee! So there 's the mill-dam, where my master was drowned about six weeks since.

DOLLY. (*Appears at the door with* JOE, *carrying table.*) Take care now, Joe—don't spill the potatoes.

BARNEY. (*Stepping aside.*) Some one coming; I 'll step aside and recognog the situation.

(DOLLY *and* JOE *place the table left.*)

DOLLY. There, now; that 's all I want of you. Go and look after Met.

JOE. (*Going.*) Look after Met? I 'd rather look after the fiend himself.

(*Exit.* BARNEY *comes forward and coughs.*)

DOLLY. (*Turns.*) Who 's this?

BARNEY. Only myself, Miss.

DOLLY. And who are you?

BARNEY. Barney O'Flynn—the lackey of my lord.

DOLLY. And who 's he?

BARNEY. One of your lodgers, I belave.

DOLLY. A lord lodging here! Ye 're wrong, man; this is no place for lords.

BARNEY. True enough, darlin', true enough, darlin'—but still my lord is here.

DOLLY. Will you give me the lie in my own house? Get out of this, ye unmannerly brute!

(*Raises broom and chases him.*)

BARNEY. Hould now! hould now! hould! sure, here 's his own direcshon in my own hand this minute. (*He shows a letter.*) Lord Travers, at Dunstan Kirke's mill, Blackburn, Lancashire—Is n't this Lancashire?

DOLLY. Yes.

BARNEY.. And is n't this the mill of Dunstan Kirke?

DOLLY. Yes.

(*She turns and slaps her broom at him.*)

BARNEY. Very well, thin, Lord Travers is here, just as sure as I 'm Barney O'Flynn, an' there 's the proof av it, a letter calling Master Arthur home to onst.

DOLLY. Arthur—Arthur Carringford!

BARNEY. Yes, of course, he 's Lord Travers, and my master.

DOLLY. Mr. Carringford a lord!

BARNEY. Of course he 's a lord—of course he 's a lord, and I 've been sent down from London to take him home, in a howl of a hurry too. Where is he?

DOLLY. There—(*pointing right*) in the house.

BARNEY. Oh! he is, is he? Now ain't you ashamed of yourself, and you were going to drive me out of this! (*Imitating her.*) "Will ye give me the lie in my own house?" Never mind, darlin', I forgive ye, I forgive—

DOLLY. (*Striking him with the broom.*) Get out o' this, ye fool! (*Exit* BARNEY, *with a howl into the house.*) Mr. Carringford a lord! And in love with Hazel too! Aye he is—I know he is—I can see it in his face every time he looks at her. Ah! if poor Hazel were only free, she might be Lady Travers, rich and grand! He has her heart already, aye, and except for Mr. Rodney, he 'd have her hand as well. (*Goes to table and begins to clean carrots.*) Ah! if I were Hazel, I know what I 'd do. I 'd marry the man I loved in spite of all the world. (GREEN *is heard singing outside "The King's Highway."*) Ah! who 's that fine young swell coming this way?

(GREEN *enters humming; sees her, stops, strikes an attitude, sings "My face is my fortune, sir, she said."* DOLLY *stares, amazed.*)

What sort of a creature is this?
(*Holding a carrot in her hand, she moves toward him.*)

GREEN. Stand where you are.
You 're the sweetest picture of surprise,
That ever yet has blessed my eyes!
Oh! 't is true, and by my soul I swear it!
(*Pointing to the wall.*) Will you permit me?

DOLLY. Permit ye what?

GREEN. To change the situation—thus.
(*He leaps over the wall.*) Ha! ha!

DOLLY. Who are ye, sir?

GREEN. A hunter of heroes.

DOLLY. What brings you here?

GREEN. A tyrant called Curiosity.

DOLLY. La, the man is mad!

GREEN. No, I grieve to say I 'm not. I wish I were:—madmen are monsters, everything monstrous is fascinating, but I, alas! I 'm not fascinating, am I?

DOLLY. La, man! I don't know what ye are.

GREEN. You may not believe it, but I

once was born, a baby too! Oh! I tell you funny things have happened to me. At the early age of one minute, (DOLLY *starts*) I howled to see the world.

Luckily my father made
A handsome fortune in lemonade,
By aid of which aid, I am glad to say
I am enabled now to-day
To see the world and have my way;
That way, remark, is this:

(DOLLY, *slightly frightened, looks at* GREEN *in astonishment during this tirade.*)

REEN. I go where I please, say what I please, and please where I can; do you understand?

OLLY. Not a single word you say.

REEN. That's just what I supposed. Then I will be plain with you: plain in fact; to be plain in feature is impossible. I was born—is that clear?

OLLY. (*Keeps her eye on* GREEN, *wondering.*) Of course.

REEN. And born queer.

OLLY. That's clearer still.

REEN.

That queerness born in me,
Now brings me here to thee—
For let me tell you here
That this is how I'm queer.

(DOLLY *starts back.*) A monster or a hero I adore; ordinary mortals I detest; they are too much like Pittacus Green.

OLLY. And who is Pittacus Green?

REEN. The humble and devoted slave now gazing in those lovely eyes. (*Seeing the carrot in her hand.*) Will you permit me to relieve you of the ponderous vegetable that cumbers these fair hands? Ah, yes! Thank you.

(*He takes it to the table.*)

OLLY. And so you are Pittacus Green?

REEN. That is my distinguished name: Pit-ta-cus Green, or, as I am called for short, Pitty Green, which is maddening! If it was Pitty Brown, Black, or Blue, but Pitty Green—it's so hanged appropriate. Of course everybody does pity Green. You may not believe it, but they say I'm cracked.

(*Very serious, he slowly crosses to right center.*)

DOLLY. (*Drawing back.*) I knew it.

GREEN. Don't be alarmed. It's lovely to be cracked!

DOLLY. Lovely to be cracked!

GREEN. Of course. Convince men that you are cracked, and they will let you do the oddest things. They'll smile instead of frown, and I, to gain a smile from lips like yours, again I'd play any game. Do you understand me now?

DOLLY. (*Laughing.*) I'd be a donkey if I didn't. I understand and like you, too, and (*frankly*) there's Dolly Dutton's hand to prove it.

GREEN. You may not believe it, but you're an angel! Dolly Dutton! So your name is Dolly Dutton? Delightful Dolly Dutton. D, D, D, indeed! You are an angel. (*Pointing to her hand.*) Will you permit me?

DOLLY. Anything that's honest.

(GREEN *attempts to kiss her hand. She snatches her hand away and he kisses his own hand.*)

GREEN. 'T is honest. Fair exchange is no robbery. Ah! I see! Consider me a beggar at your feet.

DOLLY. Now tell me truly—what it is that brings you here.

GREEN. As I said before, a monster or a hero I adore.

DOLLY. And do you expect to find a monster here?

GREEN. Yes, one in particular, Dunstan Kirke, the miller of Blackburn Mill. He is the monster that I mean, the rarest monster ever seen. A monster of goodness, who, during the last ten years, has saved from death by drowning at least forty souls, with their bodies attached to them.

DOLLY. And so you're here to see my surly old uncle, who saves other folks, perhaps, while he destroys his own daughter.

GREEN. Destroys his own daughter? Superb! Does he destroy her often? I mean is he taken so frequently? A charming old creature! Sit down. (*Politely bowing, showing chair.*) Make yourself at home; I do. Tell me all about him. (*He sits at the table.*)

DOLLY. (*Joining him at the table.*) Well, sir, you've heard of the many he's saved. Have you heard of the one he's sold?

GREEN. No! Someone sold? Delightful! Who was it?

DOLLY. The pride of this family, sir, my cousin, Hazel Kirke; she's the one that's sold.

GREEN. Oh! Is she? Indeed! poor

thing, I sympathize; I've been sold myself. Who sold her?

DOLLY. Her own father, Dunstan Kirke, your hero!

GREEN. Dear me! Why did he do it?

DOLLY. Because he loves his old mill more than anything else in the world. Seven years ago the bank that held my uncle's savings broke, and the old man was about to lose the mill, when Aaron Rodney loaned him money without interest or security.

GREEN. He was a jolly old idiot! What was his little game?

DOLLY. When the mill was safe, Dunstan Kirke asked the 'Squire what he could do to prove his thankfulness.

GREEN. Oh! ho! I smell a rat.

DOLLY. "Sir," said the 'Squire, "you have a daughter whom I like; give me leave to send her off to school, have her taught, and then become my wife and the lady of Rodney Hall."

GREEN. Just so. That's the rat I smelt. Ah! ha! precisely—Rodney goes to her, makes love to her, fills her mind with gaudy pictures, chromos, thromos, and tells her of the good his wealth will do for her and hers; and so she, a thoughtless child, makes a rash promise to an old scoundrel, which promise is sure to play the dev—Mephistopheles with them both.

DOLLY. Why, man, how did you know that?

GREEN. Quite simply; I guessed it. (*Rising slightly, he leans over the table.*)

DOLLY. Well, then, ye're not so much of a fool as ye look.

GREEN. Bless you for those kind words! (*Drawing back.*) Tell me, what became of your cousin?

DOLLY. Seven years ago she was sent to school; six months ago she returned.

GREEN. Then she was awfully fond of old Rod, of course?

DOLLY. She's proud and silent, sir, but I, who love her, read her heart, and I know that Aaron Rodney is not the man she loves.

GREEN. Egad! The situation inspires me! What would you say if I were to clear your Cousin Hazel of her bargain with the 'Squire?

DOLLY. (*Rises and goes toward the house.*) I'd say ye were the best man that ever crossed the threshold of Blackburn Mill.

GREEN. (*Excited, follows her.*) That being the case, what would you give me to have it done?

DOLLY. Anything I've got.

GREEN. Even your heart?

DOLLY. La, man! I have n't got any.

GREEN. Have n't you? Well, then, would you give this fashionable substitute?

DOLLY. Oh, yes, if ye'd care to take it! (*Sticking out a dirty hand.*)

GREEN. (*Taking it.*) H'm! It's a little mouldy, misty, mildewy, millery, the soil of honest labor, I mean. Yes, this is romance, and I'm the Roman. I'll be your best man; I'll outwit old Rod or die.

DOLLY. But how, man? How?

GREEN. You may not believe it, but I once had a mother; funny things have happened to me. That mother, she never could wind a yarn without making a snarl, and I could never undo the snarl without telling a yarn.

DOLLY. What of that?

GREEN. I have great faith in the power of a yarn to undo a snarl. Now there's a snarl in this family; give me the leave to tell yarns enough, and I'll guarantee to undo the snarl. Ha! ha! ha! Why, bless me, it's perfectly delightful! (*He paces up and down,* DOLLY *following him.*) I'm tempted to play a new rôle, turn dramatist in real life! We've only to manage a little to make the play what we please. There's the stern father, Dunstan Kirke; the heavy villain, old Rod; the pretty victim, Hazel Kirke; the scheming cousin, that's you; the good-natured idiotic busy-body,—

DOLLY. That's you; and why do you stop?

GREEN. Confound it, there's something lacking! We'll imagine here's our Andromeda chained to a rock, and about to be devoured by a dragoon—no, a dragon:—wanted, the hero, Perseus, to deliver her. Where shall we get a hero? As Byron says: "I want a hero; an uncommon want, when every month sends forth a new one."—that's Don Juan. Egad! I have it! We'll advertise. (ARTHUR *whistles outside.*) Hello! How's this? Who's that?

DOLLY. Only one of my uncle's patients.

GREEN. Who is he?

(*Enter* ARTHUR.)

DOLLY. Here he comes; find out for yourself.

GREEN. Fate, I thank thee! The con-

quering hero comes. (*He goes right.*)

RTHUR. Ah, Miss Dolly! Have you seen my dog?

OLLY. Perhaps he's with Hazel. She went off with Met a little while ago. Shall I find her for you?

RTHUR. You're very kind; if it is n't too much trouble. I should be glad of a little of Miss Hazel's company, if she's at leisure. You know I must soon leave this dear old place.

(*He sits at the table.*)

OLLY. I'll try to find her, sir.

(*Exit left center.*)

REEN. (*Looks at* ARTHUR *and starts.*) Ye great gods of war!

RTHUR. (*Noticing him for the first time.*) Ha! What idiot is this?

REEN. It is, it is! By the bolts of Jove, it is!

RTHUR. (*Coolly.*) Indeed! Is it?—what is?

REEN. You is—am—you are—Either I'm a cow, or this is Lord Travers!

RTHUR. (*Rising angrily.*) Who is Lord Travers?

REEN. You is—am—are. Look at me sharp. Don't you remember P. G.? Have you forgotten our tiger hunt in India? Ah! there was a monster worth meeting: he met you and treed you too. Can't you recall your old comrade of the jungle, Pittacus, the mouse that freed you, the lion? Why, it was the proudest shot of my life!

RTHUR. (*Extending his hand.*) On my word! Is it possible—you here?

REEN. Of course I am! (*Wringing* ARTHUR'S *hand.*) And, bless my soul, how glad I am to see you.

RTHUR. Hold on, stop; do you know what you are doing?

REEN. What am I doing?

RTHUR. The arm you are torturing is only half mended.

REEN. Gracious! What do you mean?

RTHUR. That this is a broken arm but slightly convalescent.

REEN. (*Seizing a carrot from the table.*) Travers, I'm a brute! Take that indigestible vegetable and crack my skull!

(*He offers the carrot.*)

RTHUR. (*Sitting again.*) Thanks, dear boy, it's cracked enough already.

REEN. Yes, precisely; I see your vengeance is complete. (GREEN *keeps the carrot and seats himself.*)

RTHUR. Now tell me how you found me out?

REEN. Oh! Quite naturally! By accident, the usual way. How did you get here?

RTHUR. Came to Lancashire to escape the tiresome nonsense of town life; went shooting with my dog, attempted to cross the stream by a tree that lay over it, just above the dam there. (*Points.*)

REEN. The what?

RTHUR. The dam.

REEN. Oh! dam!

RTHUR. Slipped like a fool, fell, broke my arm in falling and sank unconscious into the water.

REEN. (*Breaking the carrot in two.*) Merciful powers!

RTHUR. My dog sprang in and held me above the surface; Kirke, the miller, caught sight of us, and jumped in; pulled me out and lodged me here, where I've had the best of care for six weeks.

REEN. (*Holds up each half of the carrot, to represent the sold and the saved, and at end of his speech, places the small half on top of the other and holds it upright.*) Great fortune! I see it all. It's the saved and the sold, side by side, beneath the same roof; she is the sold, and you are now the saved. Two hearts with but a single stock. Travers, my dear boy, you may not believe it, but there's more than accident in this arrangement.

RTHUR. Undoubtedly, but your exclamations are somewhat obscure.

REEN. Look here, old man, let's get to business. Time flies. I helped you when you were in a carrot—no, no—I mean a stew, a pickle; and now you must help me.

RTHUR. With pleasure! How can I do it?

REEN. By falling desperately in love.

RTHUR. (*Laughing.*) Oh! Falling in love! Why, that's your business; you were always falling in love.

REEN. Of course, why not? "I love to live, and I live to love." As the poet says, "Come live with me and be my love."

RTHUR. Eccentric dog! You always manage to make logic and delight agree.

REEN. Ah! Travers, I've met my fate at last!

RTHUR. Nonsense! You were always meeting your fate. Who is it this time?

REEN. Dolly Dutton, the miller's niece.

RTHUR. You'll find her rather a lively fate, I fancy.

GREEN. Precisely! I know I shall, that 's the way I like 'em. She 's a perfect monster.

ARTHUR. Monster?

GREEN. Yes, a monster of beauty and goodness; but come, I say again, will you do me a favor and fall in love?

ARTHUR. Certainly, with whom?

GREEN. With a friend of mine. Will you do it?

ARTHUR. Certainly. I find there 's nothing easier than to fall; I 've tried one element, I 've no fear to try another. With whom must I fall in love?

GREEN. An angel in a fix; Hazel Kirke, the miller's daughter.

ARTHUR. (*Sternly.*) Stop, sir; I shall not tolerate nonsense that touches her good name. Understand this at once.

GREEN. (*Staring.*) Capital! I 'm more than satisfied! I 'm ecstatic. You 're in love with her already.

ARTHUR. (*Rising angrily.*) Sir! (HAZEL *sings outside.* GREEN *crosses to right center.* ARTHUR *goes to the gate, starts, returns slowly and seats himself. At the end of the song he goes to* GREEN.) Green, Miss Kirke is coming. I 'm known here simply as Arthur Carringford; you must not betray my title; it would only raise a barrier between me and the golden hearts to whom I owe so much.

GREEN. (*Taking his hand.*) Travers, I honor your sentiments, and will respect your wish.

DOLLY. (*Appearing at gate.*) Here she is, Mr. Carringford.

(*Enter* HAZEL, *with a basket of flowers, followed by* MET.)

HAZEL. (*At gate, to* MET.) Now, Met, go to Mother Weedbury's cottage and cut some wood for the poor thing, and stop there till I come. I will be there to help her with the children this afternoon.

MET. All right, Missus, I 'll go; but mind it 's for you, not for the old woman.

(*Exit.*)

HAZEL. Good-morning, Mr. Carringford.

ARTHUR. Good-morning, Miss Hazel, I 'm glad to have a glimpse of you at last.

MET. (*Appearing in gate.*) Hi! Missus, I say, may I go by the big woods?

HAZEL. No, Met, take the straight path.

GREEN. And follow your nose. (*Exit* MET.) I 'm afraid you 've given him a terrible task; if he follows his nose he will have a long journey before he gets to the end of it. Still, a brute with a long nose generally has some scents about him, ha, ha, ha! Do you see? you may not believe it, but that 's a joke. (HAZEL *notices him with surprise.*) Oh! Excuse me! (GREEN *speaks aside to* ARTHUR.) Travers, don't you see what an idiot I am making of myself? Have mercy! Why don't you present me to the lady?

ARTHUR. Miss Kirke, permit me to present a very dear old friend, Mr. Pittacus Green.

HAZEL. (*Extending her hand.*) He 's doubly welcome, as your friend, and for his own frank face.

GREEN. (*Clasping her hand.*) Ah! Miss Kirke, I 'm a very old-fashioned young fool. Will you permit me? (*Kisses her hand.*) I am your slave. (*Aside.*) Pittacus, there 's no use, you 're an assassin from this hour; the one dear purpose of your life is to get Squire Rodney cremated without delay.

(*Enter* RODNEY *by the gate. He watches* HAZEL.)

HAZEL. Let me share my treasures. (*She places a flower in* GREEN'S *coat.*) There, what do you say to that?

GREEN. I say nothing, nothing! I am dumb with delight. (*Aside.*) Decidedly, old Rod is a doomed man.

(PITTACUS *goes toward the wall and sees* RODNEY *appear in the gateway.*)

HAZEL. (*To* ARTHUR, *embarrassed.*) Will you accept a flower?

ARTHUR. (*Taking it.*) Thanks.

(*He withdraws a little.*)

RODNEY. (*Coming forward.*) Hazel, now ye 've served the others, can't ye think o' me a little?

HAZEL. (*Starting; then with composure.*) I beg your pardon. I did not see you, Mr. Rodney; you are welcome to what remains.

(*She hands him the basket.*)

RODNEY. (*Taking out leaves.*) Emblem of my hopes, nothing but leaves; dead and withered leaves!

(*He puts the basket on the table, and goes out through the gate.*)

GREEN. (*Looking after him.*) As Dr. Hamlet says, that 's nux vomica for the gentleman.

ARTHUR. (*Coming down, right, speaks to* GREEN.) Let us go, we 're in the way. —Miss Hazel, if you 'll permit me, I 'll

take my friend to my room for a talk of old times.

AZEL. Sorry to lose you.

(ARTHUR *goes out.*)

REEN. My dear Miss Kirke, you may not believe it, but, by the justice of Jove, we 'll meet again.

(HAZEL *goes out through the gate.* GREEN *sings "We shall meet again," and goes towards the porch.*)

OLLY. (*Barring his passage.*) Stop! stop! stop!

REEN. (*Ending his song with a trill.*) I must finish in the right key.

OLLY. Well, now, look here; you promised me to free my cousin Hazel from her bargain with the Squire. When are you going to begin?

REEN. The very next time I meet old Ram Rod. He was here just now. If there 's a timid bone in his body, I 'll make him come to terms, and he 'll die a bachelor, just as sure as—you 're the prettiest girl that ever blest my eyes.

OLLY. La, Mr. Green, you 're too full of sweet words, I 'm thinking.

REEN. Dear me, if my words were only as sweet as your face, I 'd put 'em on the market and bust up the sugar trade, I would.

OLLY. Hoity toity, man! (*Going.*) Keep your promise, Master Green, an' I 'll keep mine.

(*She goes out through the porch.*)

REEN. (*Looking after her, at door.*) Pittacus, you may not believe it, but the day that girl was born was the brightest in all the year! Oh, love! love! love! Romeo and Juliet! Oh, roses! Nightingales! balconies, rope ladders, and various things attached to the passion of love! At last, poor Pitty, you have a work to do. And what a work! To save two young and loving hearts from misery and a monster! (*Turns and sees* RODNEY *coming.*) Stars of the summer night, far in yon azure height! The monster!

(*Enter* RODNEY, *by gate.*)

Why, you 're the very man I want to see.

RODNEY. Well, sir, I 'm here and easily seen.

GREEN. (*At right of table.*) You 'll permit me? (*He shows a chair.* RODNEY *drops into the chair at left of table.*) First, then, let me inform you that

I 'm Captain Green, of Her Majesty's marine.
But I 'm not so verdant as my name may seem!
I know a wronged man when I see him, sir, and permit me to assure you, sir, that you are one.

(*He sits at right of table.*)

RODNEY. Indeed, sir, how am I wronged?

GREEN. As Shakespeare, a poet, says: "She who steals my heart steals trash: 't was mine, 't is hers, and hath been slave to thousands; but she who filches from me my purse, robs me of that which much enriches her, and leaves me poor indeed." (RODNEY *laughs.*) Do you see the point?

RODNEY. No, it 's a little dull.

GREEN. Then I 'll sharpen it. A certain rich Squire saves a certain poor father from ruin, and spends a little fortune in having the daughter taught to become his wife—that is the taking of the purse.

RODNEY. Well?

GREEN. Before the wedding 's had, and the purse is paid for, a good-for-nothing young fellow tumbles into a ditch, is fished out by the father, nursed by the daughter, and that is the stealing of the heart—do you understand?

RODNEY. I think I do.

GREEN. Do you see the danger?

RODNEY. Not yet.

GREEN. Why, it 's as plain as your face, ha, ha, ha, ha! You see, women are curious creatures. You may not believe it, but the silly fools prefer hearts to pennies; youth and beauty they like better than age and ugliness. Do you see now?

RODNEY. (*Rises.*) Thanks to your extreme politeness, I should think I might.

(*He crosses to gate.*)

GREEN. Squire, there 's but one way out of this: Threaten to fight the fellow, challenge him and frighten him away. Do you take?

RODNEY. (*At gate.*) I do.

GREEN. Spoken like a man. When shall the fight begin?

(DOLLY *enters, watching them from the porch.*)

RODNEY. Without delay.

(DOLLY *draws back in door, right.*)

GREEN. You 're a hero, sir, a man of nerve; I 'm proud to know you. Count on me, count on me, sir, to fix things right. (*He offers his hand.* RODNEY *does not take it, but lifts his hat and goes out.*) Still, Squire, I 'm exceedingly proud to know you. (*With delight.*) Splendissimus! Gloria et victoria!

DOLLY. (*In disgust, coming forward.*) So, sir, you be mighty thick with Maister Rodney now!

GREEN. Exactly; but my thickness is the thinnest thickness that ever was thicked; do you understand that?

DOLLY. My heart, man! Ye daze me dumb with your talk.

GREEN. My dear, the snarl is settled. He's the easiest ass to manage I ever met. Before another day, he'll challenge Carringford and go in haste (*Pointing downward.*)—to heaven.

DOLLY. (*In astonishment.*) To heaven!

GREEN. Then, Miss Dolly, your cousin will be free, and you'll be bound, yes, bound, to keep your promise: your heart, your hand, or both.

DOLLY. You'll get my hand over your head if you don't mind.

GREEN. Delightful! I'd like that—let me show you how. (*Taking her hand, he lifts it over his head.*) There, over my head, so. (*Putting it round his neck, he kisses her.*)—And so!

DOLLY. (*Flinging him off.*) How dare you, sir?

GREEN. Now I've done my part, it is your turn. (DOLLY *pretends to strike him.*) Oh, no, not that!

MERCY. (*Outside.*) All right, Mr. Rodney, I'll tell Dunstan what ye say.

GREEN. Whose honey-laden organ is that?

DOLLY. That's Hazel's mother.

GREEN. Dear me! Hazel had a mother?

DOLLY. Why, of course, she has her now.

GREEN. Oh! I see, funny things happen to others as well as me! Well, then, now, seriously your part is to see her mother, and tell her you know that Rodney is not the man that Hazel loves.

DOLLY. I'd never dare do that.

GREEN. What! would you desert me now? upon the verge of great success? No! Courage! Speak! and your cousin will be blest.

(*Enter* MERCY *at door.*)

Ah! Here she comes! I'll leave her to the tender mercies of your tongue. (*He goes to the table for his hat.*) Madame, will you permit me? (He *takes the hat, going.*) I'll humbly take my leaf. (*Takes a leaf from the basket. At door.*) Madame, in the words of the immortal bard, Avon, if all the world were in the right, you and I would never be in the wrong. This was sometime a paradox, but now—(*Sings, "When the bloom is on the rye."*) you may not believe it, it's true, it's true!

(*Exit through the porch, putting on his hat.*)

MERCY. Dolly, who be that?

DOLLY. A man named Pitty Green.

MERCY. Pitty Green! An odd name, and he seems queer a bit, here!

(*Points to her forehead.*)

DOLLY. That's all right, Aunt, so long as he's sound here. (*Points to her heart.*)

MERCY. Aye, that's true, Dolly, that's true.

DOLLY. Aunt Mercy!

MERCY. Well, Dolly?

DOLLY. Did ye mark the look in Hazel's face this morning, when her father told her Mr. Carringford had been here long enough?

MERCY. What sort o' look, girl?

DOLLY. A pale, frightened, suffering look, Aunt; she's in love with Mr. Carringford, as sure as I'm a living woman.

MERCY. (*Starting.*) My heart, child! does thee really mean what thee says?

DOLLY. Indeed I do.

(*Enter* HAZEL.)

But hush! Here she comes.

HAZEL. Mother dear, be sure to let me know when father returns. You won't forget? Don't forget it, please.

MERCY. Where's thee goin', child?

HAZEL. I'm going to take my drawing lesson from Mr. Carringford.

MERCY. Thee can wait a bit. I've a word to say to thee. Dolly, thee'll find work in the house.

DOLLY. All right, aunt. (*Exit.*)

MERCY. (*Sitting left.*) Hazel, child, come here and kneel at my feet as thee did when a little one, and I taught thee to pray. (HAZEL *kneels beside her.*) My child, many i' this world may say they love thee, but none'll ever do it as I do. Thee may have loads o' friends and lovers too, but thee can never have but one mother. Well, child, can't thee trust her?

HAZEL. Trust her? Have I ever distrusted her?

MERCY. Aye, thee's distrustin' her now—there's that in thy heart she ought to know.

HAZEL. (*Embarrassed.*) Why, mother, what do you mean?

MERCY. Oh! Thee knows well eno' what I mean; I've been foolish, child, and blind. I forgot the dangers o' youthful

blood, and I felt too sure o' thy promise to be Aaron Rodney's wife. But my eyes are open now; I 've discovered thy secret, lass; and I must speak to thee.

AZEL. (*In anguish.*) Oh! mother, spare me—spare me—it is too late! It is too late!

(*Buries her face in* MERCY'S *lap.*)

ERCY. (*In horror, rising.*) Too late! what does thee mean, child? Speak! Lift up thy head and look me i' the face.

(HAZEL *looks her in the face.*)

AZEL. Mother!

ERCY. (*Relieved.*) Ah! it 's a' reet, thee can look me i' the eye still, like an honest lass. But oh! I see it all now. That Maister Carringford be a bad man —a bad man.

AZEL. (*Indignantly.*) Mother!

ERCY. There 's no use, Hazel—I know all thee 'd say for him! But thy father saved his life, and cherished him in his house, and this is his gratitude, to make love to thee—the plighted wife o' another man.

AZEL. No, mother, you wrong him! He has never spoken a word of love to me in his life.

ERCY. An' has thee been won then wi'-out wooing?

AZEL. Oh! how can I tell? All that I know is that day by day his voice has grown sweeter, his words wiser, his very presence more precious. I did not realize how empty my life would be without him, till now the time has come for him to go. It seems as if the shadow of death were upon my heart—it has grown so dull and heavy—so dull and heavy!

ERCY. Does thee say he has never told thee that he loves thee?

AZEL. Never! And yet I know he does. When my back is turned I can feel his eyes upon me.—I saw them once by accident in the glass. I knew all then, for I saw in them my own misery—my own love.

(*She goes to* MERCY'S *arms.*)

ERCY. My poor child! But we must do the right, if it kills us. There 's but one remedy for this, the short and sharp one.

(*Starts to go.*)

AZEL. Where are you going, mother?

ERCY. He must leave this house at once.

(*Going.*)

AZEL. (*Stops her.*) No, it is not for you to send him away; that is my duty. It will be less of insult to him, and less of agony to me.

MERCY. Thee has not the strength to do it.

HAZEL. I will find it! Send him here to me, and I promise you I will tell him we must part at once.

MERCY. (*Speaks as she goes.*) Aye, it 's better so. Perhaps thee 'll fret less if thee send him away. Thee shall have it thy way, Hazel, child. (HAZEL *comes to her and she kisses her.*) Courage, lass, be strong i' the battle today, and thee 'll be rich i' the triumph tomorrow.

(*She goes out through the porch.*)

HAZEL. What am I going to do? Drive away the happiness that heaven sends me? Insult the man I honor most—and all for what? To keep the rash promise of a silly, thoughtless girl, and so break two harmless loving hearts! (*She crosses to the table, and sits at right.*) Oh! I must not think of it or I shall rebel.

(*Enter* ARTHUR.)

ARTHUR. (*Coming to the table.*) Why, Hazel, what 's the matter? (*She rises coldly. He checks himself.*) Pardon me, Miss Kirke, I have just learned that you wished to speak to me.

HAZEL. (*With emotion, looks about the room.*) Mr. Carringford, I have sent for you to say what may sound strangely from me—but you must leave this place at once.

ARTHUR. Leave this—? May I know why?

HAZEL. No, not from my lips.

ARTHUR. Do you wish me to go?

HAZEL. (*With nervous vehemence.*) Yes, yes, go quickly!

(RODNEY *enters, unseen by them.*)

ARTHUR. (*After a pause; sadly.*) Yes, you are right—I will go—I was going. (*Extending his hand.*) Bid me goodbye. (*She turns her face away; extends her hand. He takes it, kisses it tenderly. She falls sobbing in the chair; he leans over her.*) Hazel! You must have mercy upon me, and let me speak.

HAZEL. No, I beseech you, leave me—leave me without a word.

(ARTHUR *turns to go.*)

RODNEY. (*Coming forward.*) Stay, Mr. Carringford, one word with me. I know. (ARTHUR *stares;* HAZEL *turns in consternation;* RODNEY *controls his emotion.*) I know that you love Hazel, and that she loves you. (HAZEL *draws*

back.) Have no fear, Hazel, child, I 'm not the man to rail at ye. (HAZEL *looks at him.*) I shall only—

(*He pauses, staggers.*)

HAZEL. (*Rushing to him.*) Oh! Mr. Rodney!

RODNEY. Nay, it 's nothing, lass—it 's nothing! I 'm a bit dazed—that 's all.

(*He sinks into chair, hiding his face in his hands.*)

HAZEL. (*Kneeling.*) Oh! Mr. Rodney, forgive us—forgive us! He did not know, for I was resolved to do my duty to you.

(*She bows her head on his knees.*)

RODNEY. Nay, nay, now—no more o' that! There 's misery enough i' this world without an old thing like me making more of it. Don't weep, child, don't weep. Every tear you shed falls like hot lead on my heart. There, there, child, cheer up, cheer up, and we 'll see what 's best to be done.

HAZEL. You do not hate me, then?

RODNEY. Hate ye? Aaron Rodney will never live to see the day he can hate ye. No, lass, I love ye still, God help me; love ye too well to ask anything save your own happiness. I only fear for what your father may do; you know how headstrong he is, and how wildly he rages at things he thinks are wrong.

HAZEL. I cannot help the past, but I can be brave for the future. I can do my duty, keep my promise—

RODNEY. And become my wife? No, child, no. (*He walks away.*) I would not ask it of ye. But this is a bad affair, Hazel. A bad affair. I did not know how far things had gone, or I would not have done what I have done.

ARTHUR. What have you done?

RODNEY. I have written to your mother, Mr. Carringford, begging her to call you away from this place at once. I know the pride of your race, sir, and I know too well your mother will never consent to your marriage with this child, and I warn ye, if ye seek to dishonor her—there is no living power will prevent me from murdering you.

ARTHUR. And I should deserve something worse if I could be false to her.

RODNEY. (*Taking his hand.*) I believe ye, lad, I believe ye, and I 'll not stand in your way.

HAZEL. Oh! Mr. Rodney, my noble friend!

RODNEY. Aye, lass, only thy friend now, but stanch till death. (*Holding* HAZEL'S *hand.*) Mr. Carringford, this child has been bound up in my heart ever since as a little one, I held her on my knee. Well, sir, for the sake of her happiness I 'll cancel my prior claim to her hand in your favor, but you must promise me to love and cherish her so long as life shall last.

ARTHUR. I promise.

(*He approaches them.*)

RODNEY. Give me your hand. As far as it lies in my power, I here bestow upon you a treasure that I would have sacrificed life itself to obtain. Take her, sir; take her, and for her sake may heaven be with you both.

(*He extends his left hand to* ARTHUR, *and is joining their hands, when* DUNSTAN *is heard outside; instantly they separate.*)

DUNSTAN. (*Outside.*) There, there! No matter yet, let the horses stand till I 've taken in these things.

RODNEY. Your father 's back, Hazel! Not a word to him of what has passed between us. I must speak with him myself first, but I cannot do it now; I 've not the strength to meet him yet. I 'll go this way. (*In the porch he turns, extending his arms. She goes to him; he kisses her forehead.*) Have no fear, child! I 'll do what I can to soften him, and so God bless you, my darling, God bless you. (*He goes out.*)

ARTHUR. (*Taking her hand.*) This is the bitterest and sweetest moment of my life.

(*Enter* DUNSTAN *with bundles. They separate.*)

DUNSTAN. Ah! lass, and here 's thy bundles. I got thy things, but left the rest for Farmer Kennedy to bring along.

HAZEL. Thanks, father, but how quickly you 've returned.

DUNSTAN. Aye, lass, there was a letter at post, so I hurried home. They said it was for me. Here, lass, read it for me.—Let me hear what it says. (*He hands her the letter; she opens it and starts.*) Well, lass, and what says the letter? (HAZEL *becomes faint; he assists her to a chair.*) My heart, child, what be the matter? There, sit down, sit down. What 's the trouble: is it bad news? Out with it. Who 's it from? Let 's hear.

HAZEL. It is signed, "Emily Carringford."

(ARTHUR *starts.*)

NSTAN. (*Looking at him.*) What ha' he got to say to me? Read it, lass, what does she say?

ZEL. (*Aside.*) There 's no use, I shall be forced to read it. "Dunstan Kirke: Dear Sir, I have been startled by learning of my son's presence in your home, and deeply pained by hearing of his conduct with your child—."

NSTAN. Eh? What be that? What be that?

ZEL. "I have besought him to return to me instantly. If he refuses, I call on you to add the force of your commands to my prayers."

NSTAN. Aye, aye, it 's getting clearer, it 's getting clearer. Go on, child, what more does she say?

ZEL. "I cannot describe my indignation at the thought of my son's love for—" (*She breaks down.*)

NSTAN. (*Sternly.*) Stop there, lass. That 's enough!—Ye need read no more! (*To* ARTHUR.) Mr. Carringford, I 've only gotten one child in all the world, and God knows I love her better than my life. Well, sir, I 'd rather bury her wi' my own hands than have her faithless to her word. Now, ye know she be the plighted wife o' Aaron Rodney. Well, then, are ye a serpent I 've cherished in my breast to bite me and mine? Have ye dared to think o' making love to Hazel Kirke?

RTHUR. Fate threw me helpless at her feet; 't was her hands nursed me back to life. Well, sir, I confess what I could not wish to help—I learned to love her!

UNSTAN. Hazel, thee hears what he says, and thee knows the duty of an honest girl. Bid him begone at once.

AZEL. No, father, I cannot.

UNSTAN. (*Astounded.*) What 's that thee says?

AZEL. If he must go, I—should go, for I, too, am guilty.

UNSTAN. What! My child avows dishonor?

AZEL. Father, hear me!

UNSTAN. Hear thee! No, no; I 've heard too much already. (*Advancing.*) I could take thy shameless heart out.

(HAZEL, *with a cry of fear, draws back into* ARTHUR'S *arms.*)

RTHUR. (*Shielding her.*) Stand back, sir, stand back!

Enter DOLLY *and* MERCY *from the house. Millers appear behind the wall and in the gateway.*)

DUNSTAN. What! In that man's arms? Before my very eyes? Out on thee, thou foul disgrace! Hear thy father's curse!

MERCY. (*In anguish.*) No, no; she is thy child, thine only child!

DUNSTAN. Begone! Thou misbegotten bairn, begone. I cast thee out adrift, adrift forever from thy feyther's love, and may my eyes no more behold thee.

HAZEL. (*Extending her arms toward* MERCY *with a cry.*) Mother! Mother!

DUNSTAN. (*Waving her back.*) Stand back; she 's lost to thee forever!

(HAZEL *recoils into* ARTHUR'S *arms; he leans over her.*)

ACT SECOND.

SCENE. *Interior of villa at Fairy Grove; a room bright with sunlight. On table at left are cigarettes and matches, also a bell; water and glass are on stand at right.*

At rise of curtain, CLARA, *a servant, is discovered dusting the room. Outside a pipe is heard playing.*

CLARA. (*Looking off.*) There 's that worthless boy blowing his pipe again, instead of minding the garden. Why did Mr. Carringford ever bring the ninny here?

(*Enter* MET. *with pipe, dressed as a gardener, and carrying flowers.*)

MET. Hi! I say, Mistress Clara, where 's the missus?

CLARA. What do you want of her?

MET. Here 's some flowers I 've been picking for her. Where is she, I say?

CLARA. She 's about here somewhere, crying, I suppose.

MET. Cryin'? What do you mean?

CLARA. For the last three days she seems to be awfully put out about something.

MET. My heart! what be the matter wi' her?

CLARA. Oh! She 's so lonely, I suppose. She goes nowhere, sees nobody, and for a week her husband has been away. I never knew him to stay so long from her

before. I'm afraid there's something wrong here, Met. What can it be?

MET. How should I know?

CLARA. You knew the missus before she came here, did n't you?

MET. What makes ye think that?

CLARA. Because she brought you here.

MET. No, she did n't bring me here; I followed her; and I'd follow her to the end of the earth if she'd let me.

CLARA. (*Sitting down.*) Let me see. That was just one year ago. Where did she come from?

MET. That's her business, not yours.

CLARA. Who was she before Mr. Carringford married her?

MET. A lady, every inch of her, and too good for him.

CLARA. Why too good for him?

MET. Now, look ye here, lass, why is it that he brings no one here to see her? Why is it his mother and none of his folks don't never come near here at all?

CLARA. I don't know.

MET. Why, of course not. Ye don't know nothing, you don't. (*Looking out of the window right.*) There she be on the shore o' the park lake. I'll take her the flowers.

CLARA. (*Rises.*) Hold on, Met., tell me first—

MET. I'll tell ye nothin', and that's more than ye desarve. (*Exit.*)

CLARA. There's a secret somewhere about this house; I can smell it in the air, and that boy knows what it is, but he's as close as the grave, and as devoted to my mistress as a miser to his gold. (*Stops suddenly at window and looks out.*) Well, I declare, what sort of a man is this coming up the path? How he mutters and shakes his head as though he were crazy. What can he want here? I must call Barney to get rid of him.

(*She goes right.*)

(*Enter* RODNEY, *left.*)

RODNEY. Young woman, one moment, please.

CLARA. (*Turning.*) Well, sir, what is it?

RODNEY. Is this place called Fairy Grove?

CLARA. Yes, sir; this is Fairy Grove.

RODNEY. (*Looking round, dubiously.*) So this is where he has hidden her!

CLARA. There he goes, muttering and shaking his head.

RODNEY. So she's here, surrounded by luxury and never dreaming of her shame —never dreaming of her shame. (*Growing excited.*) I have found you at last, Arthur Carringford, and you shall right the wrong you've done her, or I shall have your life—your life!

CLARA. (*Approaching him.*) Good man, what do you want here?

RODNEY. (*Turning to her.*) Is your mistress in?

CLARA. You mean Mrs. Carringford?

RODNEY. (*Intensely.*) Is she called that here?

CLARA. Is who called what, sir?

RODNEY. Your mistress, is she in?

CLARA. Certainly. Do you want to see her?

RODNEY. (*Startled.*) No, no; it would only frighten her. But you know she is not—No, no, not for the world! It would sadden her to see me. What am I saying? What am I saying?

CLARA. (*Aside.*) I must get Barney here at once.

(*She runs to door at right.*)

RODNEY. (*Turns and sees her going.*) Stop! Come back! (*Clara returns.*) Don't go till ye tell me—

CLARA. Tell you what, sir?

RODNEY. Does he treat her well? Is she happy here?

CLARA. (*Astonished.*) I don't know.—What do you mean, sir?

RODNEY. If he made her unhappy, I'd tear his heart out.

CLARA. (*Terrified, screams, and runs right, calling:*) Barney! Barney!

(RODNEY *follows and brings her back.*)

RODNEY. Hush! Be quiet! or you'll bring her here. If you make a noise she'll come. Don't fear. I mean no harm. I'll go now. I only want to be sure I've found the right place. What's your name?

CLARA. Clara, sir.

RODNEY. Clara!—a goodly name and you have a kind face. I'll trust you with a message. Tell Hazel for me—I mean your mistress—tell her not to grieve. Tell her heaven has her in its blessed keeping. Tell her that I'm near at hand to guard her life, to enforce her rights; tell her this, please, from me.

CLARA. Who are you, sir?

RODNEY. I'm Mr.— (*Checks himself.*) A friend, that's all, a friend! She must not know my name; you won't tell her that, will you?

CLARA. I don't know it, sir.

RODNEY. True, that's good; take this.

(*Handing her money.*)

CLARA. What is it?

DNEY. Gold. Money.
ARA. I—I—don't want it, sir—would n't ake it for the world!
DNEY. Yes, take it, to pay for the serv- ce I want of you. (*Taking her hand.*) Watch him, see how he treats her. (*Go- ng.*) Now to return to this man's nother; bring her here and learn her lecision at once. (*At door.*) You are o tell me all when we meet again.
(*He goes out at left.*)
ARA. (*Looking after him.*) Meet again! Not if I see you first! The nan 's as crazy as a loon!
(*Looks at the money.*)
(*Enter, right,* BARNEY, *singing.*)
RNEY. Is that you, darlin'? What 's hat ye 're lookin' at?
ARA. Gold, I think. I can hardly be- lieve it 's real though.
RNEY. (*Snatching, examines the money.*) Faith! that 's pure gold, sure enough, the genuine article, like your- self, heaven bless you. Ah! Clara, this is the sovereign of the world, but you, you 're the sovereign of my heart.
(*Turns away.*)
LARA. Ah! ha! Barney, no nonsense, give me my money.
ARNEY. (*Comes back.*) And how do I know it 's yours?
LARA. Did n't you snatch it out of my hand just now?
ARNEY. Sure, that don't prove it 's yours.
LARA. Come, come now, give me my money.
ARNEY. Where did ye get it?
LARA. From a crazy creature who was here just now.
ARNEY. Crazy, was he?
LARA. Yes.
ARNEY. Of course he was crazy, or he would n't have given it to you. I 'll go and find that lunatic and restore his fortune. (*Going.*)
LARA. (*Following him.*) Barney O'Flynn, will you give me that sover- eign?
ARNEY. How can I give what is n't my own, dear?
LARA. Do you mean to keep it yourself?
ARNEY. Keep it! No, indeed, I mane to exchange it.
LARA. For what, Barney?
ARNEY. For the sweetest thing a man could drame of, wan of your kisses, my darlin'.

(*She screams, flings him off, and goes out right, as* ARTHUR *enters left with overcoat on arm, smoking a cigarette.*)

ARTHUR. Well, Barney!
BARNEY. (*Starting.*) Mealy murther! Master, ye frightened me; sure, sir, I 'm glad ye 're back again.
ARTHUR. (*Tossing his overcoat to* BARNEY.) Where 's my wife?
BARNEY. Your wife, sir?
ARTHUR. Certainly, my wife.
BARNEY. (*With a cough.*) Oh! yes, certainly, she 's in the garden, I belave.
ARTHUR. (*Sitting at the table.*) Let her know that I 've arrived.
BARNEY. All right, sir. (*Going, he looks back.*) He 's in one of his quare moods again. He 's getting tired of this al- ready. I knew it! I knew it! I knew it! He 'll end it soon—they always do. Ah! there 's nothing like a Scotch mar- riage on the wrong side of the line to save the trouble of a divorce and chate the lawyers. (*Exit.*)
ARTHUR. (*Taking out a letter, reads.*) "My dear Travers, your mother is in a very dangerous condition. To-day she arose for the first time in six months, laboring under some great excitement that is giving her temporary strength; she asks the most searching questions concerning you. She grows more impa- tient every day for your marriage with Lady Maud." (*Folding the letter.*) Strange; very strange; I hoped for good news. Ah! will this never end? Shall I never be able to show the world the noble woman who is my wife?
(*He falls in a reverie.*)

(HAZEL *runs in. Seeing him, she creeps up behind and puts her hands over his eyes. He exclaims gladly:*)

Hazel! Hazel!
HAZEL. Ah! you are back at last, my darling.
ARTHUR. (*Embracing her.*) Apparently.
HAZEL. Oh! I 'm so glad, so glad; I 've been almost dead with loneliness.
ARTHUR. Have you really missed me then so much?
HAZEL. More than you will ever know or care, I fear.
ARTHUR. Oh! I love to have you miss me.
HAZEL. Of course you do; you would n't love me if you did n't.

ARTHUR. And you're not tired yet of these iron bonds of matrimony?

HAZEL. I call them golden bonds.

ARTHUR. And so they are, so they are, darling. May they always hold us heart to heart.

HAZEL. (*Saddens.*) Heigh ho! (*Rises.*)

ARTHUR. Heigh ho? (*Amazed.*) Well, well, what does this mean?

HAZEL. Oh! Only a silly thought. I'm superstitious; too much happiness is dangerous, sometimes, you know, that's all.

ARTHUR. (*Taking her hand.*) Little woman, do you know I'm not blind—there's something troubles you. What is it?

HAZEL. (*Imitating him.*) Big man, do you know I'm not blind, and there's something troubles you? What it is?

ARTHUR. Come, come, dear, I'm in earnest.

HAZEL. (*Sobered.*) And so am I, dear. For the last few weeks, whenever you've been at home, you've been so silent and moody. Oh, Arthur, can't you trust me with your sorrow as well as with your joy? Come, dear, tell me what troubles you, darling?

ARTHUR. Business, that's all. But you, Hazel, you have no such excuse for sadness.

HAZEL. I, sad? (*Laughing, she rises.*) Why, I'm the gayest creature in the world.

ARTHUR. (*Holds her hands.*) You try to be before me, but when you've supposed me absent, I've seen you in tears. Have I not done all that I could to make you happy?

(*He puts his arms about her.*)

HAZEL. (*Ardently.*) Oh, indeed you have!

ARTHUR. Then why have I failed?

HAZEL. Failed! You have not failed! You have made me too happy. My happiness startles me sometimes, I so little deserve it. I confess at moments I am haunted.

ARTHUR. Haunted by what, dear?

HAZEL. (*Going to the couch at right.*) I hardly know—a vague, uncertain dread. This past year has been so strange, the way we met, our secret marriage in Scotland—

ARTHUR. Yes, but you know why our marriage had to be so secret.

HAZEL. Yes, because your proud mother had set her heart upon another marriage for you.

ARTHUR. My mother has been determined to make me the husband of Maud Wetherby; she has been very ill for years. To have acknowledged my marriage with you would surely have been to kill her. So I was forced to have our marriage take place in the way that offered least risk of discovery by her.

HAZEL. Oh! my darling, I do hate this hiding! It gives our marriage the color of a crime. How much longer must it last?

ARTHUR. I have been hoping every day that my mother would grow strong enough to learn the news that you are my precious little wife, but I am disappointed; she is no better.—I even fear she is growing worse.

HAZEL. Your mother deceived! My father broken-hearted! Oh! it is horrible! (*She moves away.*)

ARTHUR. (*Angrily.*) What a fool I've been! (*He paces the floor.*)

HAZEL. (*In dismay.*) What do you mean?

ARTHUR. I've been stupid enough to fancy that my love—my devotion—might suffice to make you forget—to make you happy!

HAZEL. (*Going to him.*) And so they do, dear. I was wrong to confess these foolish fears to you. Say you forgive me?

ARTHUR. (*Embracing her.*) Forgive you? No, little woman, it is for you to forgive!

HAZEL. Forgive what, dear?

ARTHUR. (*Gravely.*) Forgive me that I have not rendered you the open honor that was due you as my wife.

(*He turns his head away.*)

HAZEL. How strangely you say that! What can you mean?

ARTHUR. No matter now, dear. (*Affecting gaiety, he crosses to left of table.*) Away with gloomy thoughts; all's well that ends well! Where are my cigarettes, Hazel? No objection to my smoking, dear?

HAZEL. Oh, no. On the contrary, I'll light one for you.

ARTHUR. Thanks, that will be delightful. Equal to the task?

HAZEL. (*Gaily taking a cigarette from the table.*) Don't burn me! Take care! (*He lights match, while she draws on the cigarette, lights it, and hands it to him with a cough.*) There, take the horrid thing! (*She goes away.*)

ARTHUR. (*Smoking, he follows her and*

puts his arm around her.) Horrid thing! Why, I declare, it 's the most delicious cigarette I ever smoked in my life. Thanks, little woman, may all our sorrows end like this, in smoke and a kiss. (*He kisses her.*)

(*Enter* GREEN, *at center, a sun umbrella over his head, and laden with sporting traps. He coughs.*)

I declare,—it 's our dear old Pitty.

(HAZEL *and* ARTHUR *separate.*)

GREEN. 'T is true, 't is Pitty, and pity 't is, 't is true! You may not believe it, but these things are a bore, and this has two bores.

(*He holds up a double-barrelled gun.*)

HAZEL. (*Laughing, goes to* GREEN.) Talk of matrimonial misery and bandboxes! What are they to the awful doom of a bachelor devoted to sport?

GREEN. Oh! I say, don't make sport of a man in mortal agony. Come to the rescue, take the umbrageous curio. (*Handing* HAZEL *his umbrella.*) The idea! billing and cooing still, a year after marriage, too. It 's an outrage on society.

ARTHUR. (*Having unloaded him.*) So it is, Green! Now, tell us to what do we owe your sudden advent here?

GREEN. To the same old lady, Dame Rumor, the despot of my life.

HAZEL. (*Laughing.*) Ah! What monstrous thing has she reported here?

GREEN. Monstrous bliss! The fame of your fishes, the taste of your game, the sound of your kisses is wafted on the breath of rumor to the uttermost end of an envious world. So here am I, with all my senses, wild to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. I 'll begin with touch. Give me your fists, ye pair of blissful curiosities! (*Taking them by the hands, he points to her hand.*) Will you permit me? (*She laughs. He kisses her hand.*) Won't you share your monstrosities with me?

HAZEL. (*With laughter.*) All we can.

GREEN. All but the kisses, I suppose.

ARTHUR. I don't see how we can reserve much else.

HAZEL. (*Sitting down.*) But what are you going to give us for letting you into our paradise?

GREEN. For you I have some news, and for that mortal I have a sermon.

ARTHUR. Well, let it be a galloping sermon, then. I 'll go and order the horses at once. (*Strikes the bell on table.*)

GREEN. Capital!

HAZEL. Sermon or ride?

GREEN. Capital, my dear, referred to his going.

ARTHUR. I 'm off. Beware, I have my eye upon you.

GREEN. Keep your ear off, that 's all we ask.

(*Enter* BARNEY, *right.*)

ARTHUR. (*Pointing to the tackle.*) Pick up those things and follow me.

(*Exit, left.*)

BARNEY. (*Taking the things.*) I will, sir; I will, sir; I will, sir. Bad luck to the game; they 've got divil the chance now. (*Exit.*)

HAZEL. Now for your news!

GREEN. I 'm just from Blackburn Mill.

HAZEL. And you have letters for me?

GREEN. No, not yet. Your father declares that the first who writes you shall leave his house.

HAZEL. (*Sadly.*) Is he still so angry with me, then?

GREEN. Angry with you? That 's putting it mild. I call him the pig-headedest old hard-heart I ever knew. He won't let them breathe your name.

HAZEL. How did you learn this?

GREEN. Dolly told me.

HAZEL. (*Puzzled.*) Dolly, is that what you call her?

GREEN. Oh, yes, if a person's name is Dolly, no harm to call her so, is there? Oh! I forgot, you don't know, do you?

HAZEL. Know what?

GREEN. Why, about Dolly. She 's done for!

HAZEL. Done for?

GREEN. Yes, going to make a fool of herself.

HAZEL. How?

GREEN. By becoming the better half of P. Green. Pity, is n't it?

HAZEL. (*Amazed.*) Do you mean to say you 're going to marry my cousin?

GREEN. Oh. no! She 's going to marry me.

HAZEL. Oh, I am so glad!

(*Offers her hand in congratulation.*)

GREEN. You may not believe it, but so am I. Will you permit me?

(*He kisses her hand.*)

HAZEL. (*Sitting on the couch.*) Now sit right down here by me, and tell me all about it.

GREEN. (*Sitting.*) Oh! it was just like Dolly herself, short and sweet. After

you left Lancashire, the doors of the old mill were sternly closed, especially against me. But it did n't matter, you see. I always have an object in life, so I suddenly became interested in dams—mill-dams. There was one near the mill: there always is a dam attached to a mill. I used to visit that dam and sketch that dam—the sight of anything damned was a relief to me. Weeks passed, but the door of the old mill remained closed. Fever ensued; I got dam on the brain and went muttering damn, damn, all day. However, nothing could dampen the ardor of my disease. At last the crisis appeared, Dolly appeared, and took Pitty, Yes, she relieved my delirium, and to ensure a curse, consented to become a ma -dam.

HAZEL. (*Laughing.*) You dear, silly old thing. So you 're going to become my cousin.

GREEN. Bless me, so I am. I did n't think of that! (*Takes her hand.*) Will you *now* permit me?

(*He kisses her hand.*)

(ARTHUR *enters at left.*)

ARTHUR. (*Approaching them.*) Hallo there! I say! I say!

GREEN. (*Coolly.*) So do I—I say. I not only say, but I do, don't I? Will you permit me? (*He kisses* HAZEL'S *hand again.*) I say, cousinship is good. A duty I owe to society, cousinship, my boy, cousinship.

(*He kisses* HAZEL, *then rises and walks away.*)

ARTHUR. (*To* HAZEL.) What does the rascal mean?

HAZEL. Something wonderful. He means—

GREEN. Hush! Quietly; his nerves are weak. Have you ordered the horses?

ARTHUR. Yes, but—

GREEN. Stop! but me no buts, but say I make peace. Hazel, my dear, go and get ready to ride and leave this reprobate to the tender mercies of the family prime minister, your cousin Pit.

HAZEL. (*Laughing as she goes.*) Oh! very well. Don't forget the sermon.

(*Exit, right.*)

ARTHUR. Now, sir, please explain!

(*He slaps* GREEN *on the back.*)

GREEN. *I* explain? Why, sir, I 've travelled three hundred miles to make you explain.

ARTHUR. Explain what?

GREEN. (*Handing to* ARTHUR *a slip of newspaper.*) That, sir.

ARTHUR. (*Reading.*) "Another important engagement in high life announced—that of Lord Travers to Lady Maud Wetherby."

GREEN. Yes, sir; that, sir, is a cutting from the *Morning Post*—a most respectable paper, and very reliable authority.

ARTHUR. (*Laughing.*) Evidently.

GREEN. (*Solemnly.*) Well, what are you laughing at? I don't see anything to laugh at.

ARTHUR. Don't you? Then suppose you look in the glass.

GREEN. Come, come, sir, this is a most serious matter.

ARTHUR. Clearly, a most solemn affair; almost as awful as the paragraph about you a few weeks since.

GREEN. About me?

ARTHUR. Something like this: "We understand that, after long and serious consideration, the Hon. P. Green has decided to become—a bachelor!" What do you think of that?

GREEN. I think it is a lie.

ARTHUR. That 's what I think of this.

(*He tears the newspaper cutting and throws it in the waste basket.*)

GREEN. There 's no analogy in the cases, sir. How can I become a bachelor since I am one?

ARTHUR. How can I marry since I am married?

GREEN. But confound it, sir, you 're not married!

(ARTHUR *turns on* GREEN.)

ARTHUR. If I 'm not married, then you must be an old maid.

GREEN. Eh? What? I don't see that! Do you dare to say that in consequence of your villainy my sex is to suffer? No, sir, it 's your manhood, not mine that 's at stake!

ARTHUR. Are you mad?

GREEN. Yes, sir, I am, blind mad. Who would n't be under the circumstances?

ARTHUR. (*Irritated.*) Under what circumstances?

GREEN. Why, sir, you commit a crime, and when I am about to implore you not to commit another, you impeach my sex, sir. You actually impeach my sex.

ARTHUR. By Jove! You are insane!

GREEN. Insane! I wish I could say as much for you. Insanity is the only excuse for such exasperating, outrageous scoundrelly conduct as yours.

RTHUR. Good heavens, Green! Are you really serious?

REEN. Serious? I should think so. I'm as serious as an avalanche, an earthquake and a volcano boiled down into one.

RTHUR. What a frightful row about nothing!

REEN. Nothing? Is it nothing to deceive an honest girl into believing she's a married woman when she is n't? Is it nothing to marry one woman and swear to love and honor her, when you love, if you don't honor, another? Is it nothing to betray where you are trusted most? Is it nothing to be a smooth, cool, calculating villain, and sit there and look as innocent and serene as an angel?

RTHUR. My dear boy, of whom are you talking?

REEN. (*Staggered.*) Oh! this is wicked, Travers. It's pure malignant cruelty. Have n't I always been a loyal friend?

RTHUR. Of course you have.

REEN. (*Sitting down.*) Then why could n't you have trusted me?

RTHUR. I've never distrusted you.

REEN. Oh, yes, you have; you dealt with me in a beastly mean manner! You've made me an unconscious accomplice in a piece of business I despise.

RTHUR. There you go again. I vow it's enough to irritate a saint. Can't you tell me plainly what in the world you mean?

REEN. What! do you mean to say on your honor you don't understand?

RTHUR. I mean to say that your gabble for the last half-hour has been Patagonian gibberish to me.

(*He moves about the room.*)

REEN. Patty—Gibb—Gabby? Can it be possible!

RTHUR. Can what be possible?

REEN. Can it be possible that you don't understand your own situation?

RTHUR. What is my situation?

REEN. Travers, you're either the most accomplished hypocrite or the biggest fool in the world. Take your choice.

RTHUR. Enough of this—come to the point. What do you mean?

REEN. As I said before, that's precisely what I've travelled three hundred miles to make you tell me. What is it you mean? (*Rises.*)

RTHUR. (*Disgusted.*) Ah! if this is one of your peculiar jokes, it's in very bad taste. (*Going.*) I'll leave you to find the fun of it yourself.

REEN. (*Astonished.*) A joke! The idea! It's no use, that floors me! (*Running after* ARTHUR, *brings him back.*) Here, Travers, come back, there must be some mistake! I give in; you've turned the tables on me. I'll explain myself.

ARTHUR. Well, begin.

GREEN. (*Hesitating.*) Confound it—

ARTHUR. What's the matter now?

GREEN. I don't know how to begin—it's such an awful business. You see I've been sneaking about the old mill lately, and a rumor reached me there that just covered me with goose flesh.

ARTHUR. Whoever suspected you of any other covering?

GREEN. Yes, I see my name is—oh! hang my name—let's get to the point. It seems Squire Rodney has been looking into your affairs, and, by Jove! he swears you've deceived Hazel Kirke!

ARTHUR. Deceived her? How?

GREEN. He says that your marriage to her was a pretence, a farce, a lie.

ARTHUR. And you, my friend, have believed him?

GREEN. How could I help it? The whole thing is so circumstantial! He declares that he has positive proof that you went towards Scotland with the pretence of marrying Hazel by Scottish law, but that you cunningly stopped on the border, and went through the flimsy Scotch ceremony upon English ground.

ARTHUR. It's an infamous slander!

GREEN. Can you prove that?

ARTHUR. I'll soon convince you.

(*He strikes the bell.*)

GREEN. How?

ARTHUR. By the testimony of a witness to my marriage—Barney.

GREEN. Barney! He's the very one that Rodney named as your accomplice.

(*Enter* BARNEY.)

ARTHUR. Absurd! Barney, I want—

GREEN. Hold on! (*Stopping* ARTHUR, *he speaks to him aside.*) I'll question him. We want to get at the truth, you know, and these chaps easily slip into a lie.

ARTHUR. I don't understand.

GREEN. You will presently. Barney, your master called you because the time has come for us to settle a certain matter, and we wish to be sure everything is all right, you know.

BARNEY. All right, sir. Faith, sir, I'm at your service.

GREEN. Well, then, my good Barney, tell

us frankly, are you quite sure that the place where Lord Travers went through the ceremony of marriage with Miss Kirke was not in Scotland?

ARTHUR. (*Starting.*) I protest—

GREEN. As you're an honest man, keep quiet. Answer my question, Barney.

BARNEY. I will, sir, when my master bids me.

(GREEN *looks in astonishment at* ARTHUR.)

ARTHUR. (*Aside, astonished.*) What a strange thing for him to say!

GREEN. Shall he answer my question?

ARTHUR. (*Looks at him in suspicion.*) Certainly; Barney, speak freely.

BARNEY. (*To* GREEN.) Well, then. sir, your question be a mighty quare one.

GREEN. Ah! In what respect?

BARNEY. Do ye think I'd betray my master?

GREEN. Oh! of course not.

BARNEY. I was brought up in the service of the gentry, sir, all my life. Do you be after taking me for a fool?

(*He turns to* ARTHUR.)

GREEN. No, I never judge a man by his looks.

BARNEY. Looks is it? Well, I know how to look after my master's interests, sir, and that's look enough for me; so of course I took good care to have such a marriage as he wanted come off in the wrong place.

(ARTHUR *starts. He faces* BARNEY, *leaning against the table.*)

GREEN. (*Looking at* ARTHUR.) What place was that?

BARNEY. Faith! the wrong place for a Scotch marriage is the English side of the Scottish line.

ARTHUR. (*Going to him appalled.*) Do you mean to say that the inn you took us to was on the border, but not in Scotland?

BARNEY. (*Astonished.*) Of course I do, sir.

ARTHUR. (*Frenzied.*) You miserable, dastardly villain, I could brain you!

(*He grasps him by the throat.*)

BARNEY. Sure, sir, I only followed your own orders.

ARTHUR. (*Amazed.*) Followed my orders?

BARNEY. To the letther, sir. Did n't you come to me all of a suddint one night, at the old tavern in Blackburn, and did n't you say, "Barney, I want to get married to onst secretly, in Scotland"?

ARTHUR. I did, you rascal.

BARNEY. Did n't ye tell me to take ye to the borders?

ARTHUR. Well?

BARNEY. Well, sir, and so I did. To the borders of matrimony, as I thought ye intended.

ARTHUR. (*Shaking him.*) Idiot! Scoundrel! Wretch! (GREEN *interferes, saying "Travers! Travers!" and frees* BARNEY. *In agony,* ARTHUR *turns away.*) Hazel dishonored—deceived, and by me—by me! Oh! It is horrible! horrible!

(*He rushes again at* BARNEY.)

GREEN. (*Interposing.*) There's something better to be done now.

ARTHUR. Yes, you are right. We will go find a curate—and I will marry her at once. (*To* BARNEY.) Imbecile! I'm about to take measures partially to amend the outrage that you have committed. Let us have no more mistakes—tell my wi— (*Pauses; then with ardor.*) Yes, before heaven and my own heart, she is my wife! Tell my wife that I have been called away, but will return soon. And, understand, not a word of this to anyone.

BARNEY. Not for the world.

ARTHUR. (*To* GREEN.) Come, let us hurry; every instant now is torture till Hazel is my wife.

(*They both hasten out.*)

BARNEY. Faith, thin, I can't make this out for the life o' me! He's lost his head as well as his heart entirely, and to a peasant's child, too. Eh! Who's this old party coming up the walk? It's Squire Rodney. That bodes no good to this house! O, murther! Who's that behind him? If it is n't Lady Travers herself! The powers purtect us—she's found us out! Oh, dear! oh, dear! may the powers purtect us! what shall we do, at all at all! Whist! She's here.

(*Enter* RODNEY, *followed by* LADY TRAVERS. *old, very ill, leaning on the arm of a footman in livery.*)

RODNEY. This is the place, my lady, and this is the man.

LADY TRAVERS. Barney, is that you?

BARNEY. Yes, your ladyship, I belave it is (*Aside.*) I'm not quite sure.

LADY T. I thought you were abroad with my son.

BARNEY. Yes, ma'am, I'm with your son and sure I fale abroad too—leastways, I don't fale at home.

LADY T. (*Faintly.*) A chair! (RODNEY *helps her to a chair.*) Water! (BARNEY

gives her a glass of water. She drinks it, handing back the glass.) Is my son here?

(RODNEY *withdraws a little.*)

BARNEY. No, my lady.

LADY T. (*Aside.*) So much the better! (*Aloud.*) Is the lady of the house in?

BARNEY. Is it Lady Travers ye mane, my lady?

LADY T. (*Sternly.*) It is not Lady Travers that I mean.

BARNEY. (*Aside.*) She knows all! (*Aloud.*) She is in, my Lady.

LADY T. Inform her that a lady would speak with her on important business.

BARNEY. (*Going.*) I will, my lady.

LADY T. Stay—not a word of who it is.

BARNEY. Oh! not for the world, my lady.

LADY T. And, Barney—

BARNEY. Yes, my lady?

LADY T. When I strike twice on this bell come here instantly. Do you understand?

BARNEY. I do, very well, my lady.

LADY T. You may go.

BARNEY. Thank you, my lady. (*Aside, going.*) Faith! I wish I were anywhere out of this. (*Exit.*)

LADY T. Thomas, return to the carriage and wait till I send for you. (*Servant bows and goes out.*) Mr. Rodney, I deem it best I should see this girl alone.

RODNEY. Yes, madam, you are right. 'T is best I should go! But, oh! madam, have pity upon her; break all gently; let your woman's heart feel for a woman's wrongs!

LADY T. It does, for wrongs of which he little dreams.

RODNEY. I have been merciful to you, madam; you must be merciful to her.

LADY T. How have you been merciful to me?

RODNEY. How? Madam, when I first learned the truth, I started out to find your son, to take his life for wronging her. Yes—

LADY T. Ah!

RODNEY. Yes, but I thought of you, his mother, and I said, "I will spare him for her sake, for she will force him to do his duty."

LADY T. And so she will!

RODNEY. I knew it, my lady! I knew it!

LADY T. (*Aside.*) A duty more imperative than to this low-born girl.

RODNEY. Believing this, I sought you out and told you all, for, believe me, madam, I never should have brought you here to put this child to shame, except it were to save her from that shame itself.

LADY T. And so you 're sure her marriage to my son—

RODNEY. Alas! my lady, it was none at all —none at all!

LADY T. (*Aside.*) Thank heaven for that! (*Aloud.*) You may go and wait for me at the inn.

RODNEY. I will, my lady. Oh, madam, I will pray heaven to bless you for this day's noble work! (*Exit.*)

LADY T. His blessings are worse than any curse! Why is this girl so long in coming? This suspense is sapping all my strength.

(*Enter* HAZEL.)

Ah! She 's here.

HAZEL. (*Coming forward in wonder.*) You wished to see me, madam?

LADY T. I did. Please be seated near me. (HAZEL *goes for a chair.* LADY TRAVERS *speaks aside.*) The old story, the fatal power of a handsome face!

HAZEL. (*Aside, as she is getting the chair.*) What a strange commanding tone! I wonder who she is?

(*Returning, she sits near* LADY TRAVERS, *who speaks after a pause.*)

LADY T. I am Lady Travers. (HAZEL *starts.*) You need not fear me; I have not come to curse, but to beg.

HAZEL. To beg of me? But why, madam, why?

LADY T. Because in your hands lies the honor of an old and noble family. I see shining in your eyes the womanhood that has so bewitched my son. And see, to that womanhood, I kneel to beg, implore a fearful sacrifice from you.

(*She kneels.*)

HAZEL. (*Helping her back to the chair.*) Oh, madam, you shall not kneel! You shall not kneel! (*Aside.*) What can she mean? (*Aloud.*) Madam, ask any sacrifice I can make in honor, and I will gladly make it for your son.

LADY T. Alas! You do not know what you promise. Listen! My husband had a ward whose fortune he wrongfully used and lost. Upon his dying bed he confessed this to me, and made me promise to hide his shame, by marrying our only son to this ward.

HAZEL. Well, madam?

LADY T. I promised, and I have lived since but to keep my word and save our honor.

HAZEL. Oh, madam! How terrible!

LADY T. My son never knew why I was so determined to make this match, but he, to humor me, promised to marry Lady Maud! Suddenly I heard he was living here with you; with grief and shame I gathered strength enough to drag myself here, to implore you to save us all.

HAZEL. Oh, what can I do? What can I do?

LADY T. Be heroic for his sake; fly from him, and save him from disgrace!

HAZEL. From disgrace?

LADY T. Yes, within a month Lady Maud will come of age, and demand a settlement of her estate. Nothing but her marriage to my son can save him from ruin and shame.

HAZEL. Oh, how horrible! My punishment begins. I, who should prove his blessing, am his curse! Beggary, humiliation and shame stare him in the face, and all—all because of me!

LADY T. Then leave him—fly from him at once.

HAZEL. And never see him in this world again? No, no, you ask more than I have strength to do—besides, what use is that? I am his wife, his wretched, wretched wife!

LADY T. What if you were not his wife?

HAZEL. Ah! Then perhaps heaven would give me the courage to fly for his sake.

LADY T. (*Rising.*) It will, heroic girl, for he is free.—You are not his wife!

HAZEL. (*Turns, stunned.*) Not his wife?

LADY T. As he has deceived me by loving you, so he has betrayed you by a pretended marriage.

HAZEL. He! Arthur? Betrayed me? 'T is false! I'll not believe it! Give me the proofs! The proofs!

LADY T. (*Sways, gasps.*) Ah! Have mercy or I shall die!

HAZEL. (*Throwing herself at her feet.*) Oh, madam! forgive me. I will be wise, calm, patient, only take back the cruel words that disgrace the man I love. Tell me that Arthur is not false, and I will leave him, bear disgrace or death, only so that he may be free from every stain.

LADY T. Poor child! (*Strikes the bell twice.*) Would that I could spare you this blow! But there is at stake a thing of greater value than your happiness or my life—the good name of an old and honorable race.

(*Enter* BARNEY.)

This man will tell you I speak the truth, when I say you are not the wife of Arthur Carringford.

(HAZEL *rises,* BARNEY *starts.*)

HAZEL. This man? Why, he was witness of my marriage.

LADY T. A Scotch marriage upon English ground, and so, illegal, worthless, void.

HAZEL. (*To* BARNEY.) Can this be true?

BARNEY. Heaven forgive us, miss, but it is.

HAZEL. True? This, then, is what he meant when he said he had not done his duty to me as a wife. He, Arthur, my brave, gentle Arthur, has deceived me. betrayed me, and I trusted him as though he were a god. Oh, my heart is breaking. (*She sobs.*)

LADY T. (*Rising, goes and puts her arms about her.*) Courage, child, courage.

HAZEL. (*Breaking from her.*) Courage for what? To face the agony of love deceived here in my own heart? To face the taunting finger of a cruel world pointing at my shame? No, never! He shall right my wrong. He shall make me an honorable wife, or—I will—

LADY T. (*Staggering.*) Stop! Child, stop! Or you will add my murder to his other crimes!

(*She clutches her chair for support.*)

HAZEL. Murder? No, forgive me, I have done wrong enough. I see it all! It is my father's curse, my father's curse! Oh, God! (*Taking off her jewels, she puts them on the table.*) Madam! you have asked me to fly for his sake, the sake of the man who has so degraded me. Here is my answer. I accepted these as tokens of love, given to an honored wife. I scorn them now. He shall have all—all! (*About to take off her wedding-ring, she stops.*) No, not this. My marriage ring! (*Kisses it.*) This I have bought with a wife's love, a woman's perdition! This I will keep! (*Going.*) The rest I leave forever.—I go to cover up his infamy with my shame—and may heaven forgive you all!

(*Exit.* LADY TRAVERS *staggers and falls back rigid in her chair.*)

ACT THIRD.

SCENE. *Evening; kitchen at Blackburn Mill; door lit by glow of fire; clothes horse with towels on it before the fire; at right, clock and cupboard, in which are*

pipe, matches, tobacco, food, and dishes; a lighted candle on the table, centre. MERCY *and* DOLLY *are discovered at the table, which is between two chairs. They are ironing; the room is dim; the clock is striking.*

MERCY. Eight o'clock! It 's time for evening prayers. Dolly, go to the mill, and call Joe and Dan.

DOLLY. All right, aunt.

(*Exit, right.*)

MERCY. Now to put awa' the linen. (*She does so in drawers at right, and returns to the table. Outside a pipe is heard playing.* MERCY *starts.*) What 's that? (*She listens, the pipe stops.*) Strange! Met used to play that tune, and it sounds like Met's pipe, too. What can it mean? Has he left Hazel? Aye, perhaps he 's coom to see me, with news of her. (*Opens the door and calls.*) Met, Met! Is that you? Met, Met! Is it you?

(MET. *enters, pale, ragged, haggard.*)

Coom in, lad, coom in and tell us the news! What 's the word? Speak, lad, speak.

MET. I want her—where is she?

MERCY. Who?

MET. Hazel—I want her—I 've tramped four hundred miles to find her.

MERCY. My heart, lad! What are ye sayin'?

MET. I must see Hazel—she 's here.

MERCY. Hazel! Hazel! Here? No, she 's not here. (MET *staggers to a chair.*) Mercy on us, what 's coom to thee, lad?

MET. Not here? Where can she be, where can she be?

MERCY. Wi' her hoosband, I suppose.

MET. No, no, she left him a month ago.

MERCY. Left him! Why?

MET. I don't know—I don't know!

MERCY. Where did she go?

MET. (*Who is seated.*) Why, I thought she 'd coom here, so I followed her on foot, but (*rising*) I 'll go back again; I 'll walk till I die, but I 'll find her.

MERCY. Ah, what are you saying, Met?

MET. (*At the door, turns back to* MERCY.) I 'm sayin' there 's something wrong; that man's mother came to the house; she was found dead there and Hazel gone.

MERCY. Great heavens, Met! You frighten me!

MET. Hazel is somewhere, wandering now, as I have been for a month, ill, cold, starving, perhaps, as I am! But I 'll go to her; I must. I will find her.

MERCY. Stop, an' I 'll go with you, lad.

MET. (*Takes her hands.*) Oh, mistress, heaven will bless you for that word.

MERCY. But you must wait till after prayers; Dunstan would miss me if I went off now; he 'd ask questions, and oh, Met, he must not know—he 's been very ill—this news would kill him.

MET. Then, mistress, you go to the master. I 'll run down to Squire Rodney's house; if I can find him, he 'll help me.

(*Goes to the door.*)

MERCY. (*Following him.*) Aye, so he will, lad. Go, then, go quickly; I will meet you at his house within an hour.

MET. Never fear, missus, we 'll find her now for sure. (*Exit.*)

MERCY. So we will—so we will. Now to get ready to find her.

(MERCY *crosses to door at left.*)

(DOLLY *enters, followed by* JOE *and* DAN.)

DOLLY. We 're all here now, Aunt Mercy.

MERCY. Aye, aye, all but the one who ought to be here the most.

DOLLY. (*Taking up a lighted candle.*) What do you mean, aunt?

MERCY. I cannot tell thee now; tomorrow, perhaps. Coom, coom, child, coom.

(*She hurries within, left. The others follow her, closing the door. The room is left in darkness. There is a pause, then a knock on the outer door. The knocking is repeated; the door opens;* GREEN *appears, looks around, then beckons outside.*)

(ARTHUR *enters.*)

ARTHUR. Well?

GREEN. Not a soul in sight; quiet as the grave.

ARTHUR. Look yonder, she may be inside.

(GREEN *opens the door at left, draws back and removes his hat.*) Well?

GREEN. They are at prayers.

ARTHUR. (*Removing his own hat.*) And Hazel?

GREEN. She is not among them.

ARTHUR. (*Sits in chair at right of table.*) Oh, shall I never find her? Never see her precious face again?

(*A psalm is sung outside, they listen reverently.*)

GREEN. Their prayers are over now; they 'll soon be here, and when they come, we 'll ask them if they have heard anything of your—of her.

ARTHUR. And if she has not been here, what are we to do?

GREEN. (*Sits at left.*) Well, you may not believe it, but I 'll be hanged if I know.

ARTHUR. I have searched for her everywhere without discovering a trace. My last hope has been to find her here. If we fail now, I shall believe the worst.

GREEN. And what is that?

ARTHUR. That she has taken her own life —murdered by me! (*Rising.*) Oh, the thought will drive me mad!

(GREEN, *rising, follows him, pacifying, and pats him on the shoulder.*)

GREEN. (*Starting.*) They 'll soon be here!

ARTHUR. What of it?

GREEN. We forget—they 'll recognize you!

ARTHUR. What if they do?

GREEN. The old miller hates you! If he knows where Hazel is, you are the one man in the world he 'll keep her hidden from.

ARTHUR. What 's to be done?

GREEN. You must leave me till Dolly comes. Once I set her tongue at work, we 'll soon know all. Go, wait outside till I 've had a chance to make her talk.

ARTHUR. (*Going.*) You 'll find me at the old seat near the lock. The moment you get news—

GREEN. I 'll fly like lightning to tell you.

ARTHUR. (*In the doorway.*) If I do not find her this time, I shall despair—despair— (*Exit.*)

GREEN. (*At door.*) Poor fellow, he 's broken-hearted, and I feel as if I 've no more backbone than a caterpillar!

DOLLY. (*Inside.*) All right, aunt, I 'm going.

GREEN. Dolly's voice! She 's coming, she 'll see me! The shock might shake her. I 'll spare her feelings for a while.

(*Leaves glove on the table and hides behind the clothes horse.*)

(*Enter* DOLLY *with basket and candle, lighting up the room. She is followed by* JOE *and* DAN.)

JOE and DAN. Good-night!

DOLLY. Don't forget to tell Squire Rodney that Uncle Kirke wants to see him here to-night.

DAN. Very good, Miss Dolly, I 'll tell the Squire myself.

(*Exit right, followed by* JOE.)

DOLLY. (*Going to the table, sees glove.*) Dear me! What 's this?—a glove! Whose glove? A man's! (*Smells; sternly.*) Pittacus! (*Turns glove.*) As sure as I 'm a woman! So he 's been here, he 's been here and gone away without a word! (GREEN *looks out, unseen by* DOLLY.) Oh, that 's just like the heartless brute.—Six weeks since he left me, promising to go and see Hazel and send me news of her; not a word since then. (*Tearfully.*) Oh, these men! these men! Why are they ever made? I can't see the use o' the faithless things. (GREEN *comes up behind her. She continues snappishly.*) Oh, don't I wish I had him here now, how I 'd make his ears burn and his head ache! (GREEN *dodges behind the clothes horse.*) How I 'd warm the brass of his cheeks for him! (*She slaps the glove across her hand, then puts it in her apron pocket. Beginning to take clothes from the horse, she slams them into the basket. While she does so,* GREEN *dodges behind clothes that remain, comically trying to conceal himself.*) The base deceitful hypocrite! (*Slams a towel in the basket*) pretending he could n't live a day without me! (*Same.*) And then leaving me here— (*Same*) for weeks and weeks (*Same*) with a breaking heart! (GREEN *snatches off the last towel.*) Mercy! Who 's that? (*Recoiling to chair at right of table, she tips it over and falls. There, as she stares up at* GREEN, *he peers over at her.*) What! So you 're there, Mr. Green?

(*Rising, she picks up the chair.*)

GREEN. No, Dolly, I 'm not there, I 'm here. I was there, Dolly, but I 've just moved.—Dolly, I 'm not Green now, I 'm blue, truly blue, to see you so severe. (*Kneeling near* DOLLY.) Dolly, oh, Dolly, pity Blue!

DOLLY. (*Sternly.*) What are you doing here, sir?

GREEN. Kneeling, I believe. You may not believe me, 't is not an kneesy thing for me to do. (*Rises, rubbing his knees.*) Ha, ha! d' ye see?

DOLLY. Yes, I see a donkey.

(*She turns away.*)

GREEN. (*Following and embracing her very lovingly, sings to the air of "Comin' thro' the rye":*)

If a donkey see a donkey
Need a donkey sigh?
And if a donkey kiss a donkey
Need a donkey cry?

(*Kisses her.*)

DOLLY. Don't! don't touch me, sir!

(*She crosses left, and moves basket to the floor.*)

GREEN. "Sir" to me? That's queer.

DOLLY. Queer? I should think it was, queer.

(*She busies herself about the room, paying no attention to him, while she moves the clothes horse and basket.*)

GREEN. Dolly, Dolly, I say!

DOLLY. Who cares what you say?

GREEN. But, Dolly, I want—

DOLLY. Who cares what you want?

GREEN. But really, my darling—

DOLLY. Don't dare to darling me after—after what's happened.

GREEN. What's happened?

DOLLY. Oh, you know well enough.

(*She sits in chair at left of table, and slaps the glove on the table.*)

GREEN. Don't jag my glove about in that manner! (*Aside.*) Oh, I see, Hazel's been here, and told Dolly everything, and she thinks I've been an accomplice in this infernal business! (*Aloud.*) Don't, Dolly, don't!

DOLLY. Don't what, sir?

GREEN. Suspect me; I'm not the man who did it.

DOLLY. (*Excited, amazed.*) You're not the man who did it?

GREEN. I am not that man.

DOLLY. (*Aside.*) Not the man, who deserted me all these weeks? He is not the man, and he says this to my face! (*Rises, exploding.*) Oh, you brazen rogue!

GREEN. It was n't me who did it—it was Barney, Barney O'Flynn.

DOLLY. Barney O'Flynn, who 's she?

GREEN. He is n't a she, she 's a he.

DOLLY. What are you talking about?

GREEN. Barney O'Flynn.

DOLLY. What of her?

GREEN. Hang it—he is n't a her—she 's a him!

DOLLY. (*Tartly.*) What is she?

GREEN. Look here, I say Barney 's a man—male, masculine, first person singular, of the Irish gender—do you understand?

DOLLY. (*Arms akimbo.*) Oh—so you pretend it 's a man that 's kept you away all this time, do you?

(*She sits at right of table.*)

GREEN. (*Sitting at left.*) Yes, and the most unmitigated ass of a man I ever saw. Dolly, if Hazel told you—that I was to blame—

DOLLY. (*Leaning over the table.*) Hazel tell me? How could she tell me anything?

GREEN. (*Puzzled.*) Eh?

DOLLY. I have n't seen her blessed face for over a year—and never will see it again, I 'm afraid.

GREEN. (*Astonished.*) Has n't Hazel been here? Has she be—

DOLLY. Here?

GREEN. (*Stammering.*) Don't you know?—No, she don't!

DOLLY. Know what?

GREEN. (*Stuttering.*) I—I mean that she must be—I that—n-nothing.

DOLLY. What do you mean by all this talk?

GREEN. N-nothing, except—that is—I only mean—to—to—hang it—I don't know what I 'm talking about.

DOLLY. (*Fiercely.*) Pittacus—you 're deceiving me! Something 's happened; don't deny it.

GREEN. I don't—yes—I don't—no—I do.

DOLLY. Where 's Hazel?

GREEN. Bless me—that 's—that 's what I wanted you to tell me.

DOLLY. Then you don't know where she is?

GREEN. No, ding it—I wish I did.

DOLLY. Have n't you seen her, then?

GREEN. Oh, yes, that is, no—not since—I say I saw, I saw that I see, saw—oh, what am I see-sawing about? I say that I see, that I saw that I see—

DOLLY. Not since when?

GREEN. Well, since the deluge, if you will have it—since she ran away.

DOLLY. Ran away—from whom?

GREEN. From her—that is—(*Looking at her, then dropping his eyes as he says*) Lord Travers.

DOLLY. From her husband, you mean?

GREEN. Y-yes, I suppose I do.

DOLLY. Suppose you do? Don't you know he 's her husband?

GREEN. (*Utterly broken, rises.*) I don't—don't know anything. I only know that life 's a nuisance—and it 's a swindle that ever I was born.

DOLLY. (*Kneeling to him, as he sits again.*) Pittacus, Pittacus! You 're hiding something—what 's come to Hazel? Why has she run away—why do you talk to me so strangely?

GREEN. Dolly, my darling, hang it! Don't look so miserable—and I 'll try to tell you all—you see—

DUNSTAN. (*Inside, calling.*) Dolly, Dolly, child!

DOLLY. (*Starting.*) That 's her father—

he 's wanting me—hurry—tell me quickly.

GREEN. No, no, not now! He 'll come and hear me, and he must never know. I must run, dear.—Meet me outside near the old tree, where we used to talk so much. The moon is shining! I 'll tell you all.

(*Rising, he starts to go.*)

DOLLY. All right, I 'll go to you the moment I get away from my uncle.

DUNSTAN. (*Inside.*) Dolly, child, are you never coomin'?

DOLLY. Yes, uncle, I 'm coming.

GREEN. (*Detaining her.*) Why don't the old bear come here to you?

DOLLY. Why, poor dear heart! He 's blind.

GREEN. Blind!

DOLLY. Yes, just after you went away, he got news of some kind that made him awfully ill. For days he was out of his mind, raving about Hazel; and when the fever went away, it left him blind.

DUNSTAN. (*Appearing in the doorway, very old and broken.*) Why, Dolly, child, what keeps thee so long, when thee hears me call?

(DOLLY *runs to him.*)

DOLLY. Here I be. (*Leading him to chair.*) I had work to finish here, uncle.

DUNSTAN. (*Sitting.*) Bring me my pipe, child.—I have much thinkin' to do to-night, an' nothin' helps me to think like my pipe.

DOLLY. All right, uncle dear, I 'll bring it to ye. (*She goes to* GREEN, *sees him out of the door, where he points outside, seeming to ask her if she 'll meet him. She motions "Yes." He kisses her loudly and goes out.*)

DUNSTAN. What be that?

DOLLY. (*Getting his pipe.*) What 's what, uncle?

DUNSTAN. That noise.

DOLLY. What noise, uncle?

DUNSTAN. 'T were a noise that sounded like a kiss, girl.

DOLLY. (*Filling his pipe.*) Oh, it must have been the—the—sputtering of the fire.

DUNSTAN. The only fire I ever heard spooter like that be the fire o' love, lass.—Who 's been here?

DOLLY. When, uncle?

DUNSTAN. Just now.

DOLLY. Here 's your pipe, uncle;—will I light it for you?

(*Striking a match.*)

DUNSTAN. Aye, lass, do. (*As she lights his pipe.*) I wish thee could only light my eyes as easy as thee lights the pipe.

DOLLY. Oh, uncle, don't talk like that. I can't abide it.

(DOLLY *puts her arm round* DUNSTAN'S *neck, and places her cheek against his head.*)

DUNSTAN. There, there, child, I 'm a weak old fool to bother thee with my burdens. Go, find thy Aunt Mercy; she be above stairs; tell her I must see her, and then get to bed.

DOLLY. All right, uncle. (*Going.*) I 'll not go to bed this night till I 've got news of Hazel. (*Exit.*)

(HAZEL *appears outside, looking through the window. Opening the casement, pale and ragged, she sees* DUNSTAN, *and pauses.*)

DUNSTAN. (*Laying down his pipe, with a sigh.*) There 's no use, even the pipe can't comfort me to-night. I moost tell my poor wife a' now. It 's hard, bitter hard, to leave the auld mill—a pauper, too—but it moost be done. Better starvation, death, anything, than more debt to Squire Rodney. Oh, that child o' mine, my only bairn, why should she have been her feyther's curse? Oh, my old heart is heavy to-night! would that I were dead, would that I were dead! (*He sobs.* HAZEL *moans and drops her head on the sill.* DUNSTAN *starts up.*) Hark, what 's that? Who 's there? Some one at the window. Who is it? Is there any one there? That 's strange.

(*He feels his way toward the window.*)

(*Enter* MERCY.)

MERCY. What art doin' there, Dunstan?

DUNSTAN. I could ha' sworn, wife, that I heard some one at the window.

MERCY. (*Starting.*) Some one at the window?

DUNSTAN. Aye, I heard a noise like a moan, and then, when I cried out, it seemed as though the window were closed quick and sharp like.

MERCY. (*Aside.*) My darling child, I know it is! I know it is! I can feel it here. What if it were Hazel? Yes, it is my child, she may be there, longin' to return! (*She takes* DUNSTAN *to his chair.*) Come, Dunstan, sit down, and let me speak to thee. Perhaps I can make thee understand the noise at the window.

(HAZEL *appears as before.*)

DUNSTAN. (*Sitting.*) What dost think it were, wife?

MERCY. Dost know what day this be, sweetheart?

DUNSTAN. Thursday, I believe.

MERCY. Yes, Thursday, the 10th day of October.

DUNSTAN. Ah! Ah-a-a-h!

MERCY. This day, two and twenty year ago, our Hazel were born.

DUNSTAN. Hist, wife, hist! Don't 'mind me o' that now.

MERCY. Oh, feyther, dear, why not? why not? That were a sweet day to us, then.

DUNSTAN. Aye, but it be a bitter day to us now.

MERCY. Feyther, what if thy child were at thy door now, longin' to coom back to the old house?

DUNSTAN. I'd bid her begone.

MERCY. Oh, Dunstan!

DUNSTAN. I'd point at these sightless eyes an' say, "This be thy work." I'd point at thee, and say, "Look at thy mother (*The wind sounds outside.*) a beggar wi' thy feyther in the street; thy work, too."

MERCY. What dost mean, Dunstan?

DUNSTAN. I mean, Mercy, wife, that the end be coom. I owe everything we gotten in the world to Squire Rodney—an' debt to him I can bear no longer now. I've sent for him to coom this very night and take possession o' the mill—and to-morrow thee and I an' Dolly moost wander out beggars, but beggars no longer to the man our flesh and blood has wronged.

MERCY. Oh, Dunstan, can thee never forgive?

DUNSTAN. Never! (*The wind sounds.*) Strangers she chose; to strangers let her look, for she be dead to us forever! (HAZEL, *with moan of despair, disappears, leaving the window open.* DUNSTAN *starts.*) Hark—that moan again!

MERCY. (*Going to the window.*) Aye and see—the window's open! Oh, Dunstan, what if it be our child, our Hazel!

DUNSTAN. Hoot, woman, it were the wind! (*It sounds again.*) There's a storm coomin' up. Maister Rodney 'ull not be here to-night. Better lock up the mill. Close the window, wife, and bolt the door, then get thee to bed. (MERCY *goes to the window and looks out.* DUNSTAN *feels his way to the door.*) Mercy, I'll go once more over the old mill I've loved so long and these hands have tended so well. Good-night, wife! Good-night, wife! Good-night!

MERCY. Good-night, Dunstan, and may the angels be wi' you, this last night i' the old mill.—An' my child may be out in the night—homeless and hungry!—No, no; I'll go for Maister Rodney. He will save Hazel, an' he's able to break the iron o' her feyther's will.

(*Exit, weeping.*)

(HAZEL *appears at the window; slowly opening the door, she steals wearily in, and shivers over the fire.*)

HAZEL. Oh, how cold I am! But no fire will ever warm me again. (*Looking about her.*) And this is home, the home that I have lost, the home I have cursed! My father's chair! How often have I sat here upon his lap, my arms about his neck, and heard him sing his dear old songs! How often have I knelt here at my mother's feet and prayed as I can never pray again! (*She sinks on her knees by the chair.*) As I never can pray again! Oh, father, father! Heaven has heard your curse.

(*With a sob, she buries her face in chair.* DUNSTAN *appears, right. He gropes across the room, places his hand on the back of the chair at which she kneels;* HAZEL *draws back with a groan. He starts.*)

DUNSTAN. What be that? (*The wind sounds.*) Nothing but the sobbing of the storm. Ah, it does me good to hear it. It sounds like the voice of my own heart. Dear old mill, my eyes will never, never more behold thee, and my hands have felt thy timbers for the last, last time. (HAZEL *follows him across the room, removes a chair from his path, kisses the lapel of his coat.*) But God's will be done! God's will be done.

(*He gropes his way to the door left, lifts his hands in prayer, and passes out.* HAZEL *goes back and bows her head on the arm of the chair.*)

(RODNEY *enters. His coat is closely buttoned up.*)

RODNEY. A fearful night! Dunstan has sent for me. What for, I cannot imagine. Perhaps he has word of Hazel. I wonder—Is that you, Dolly—asleep? (HAZEL *starts and looks up.* RODNEY, *recognizing her, draws back, then kneels at her feet.*) Here? Back again? Oh, Hazel, my angel, my poor sufferin' saint—bless ye for coming back! You've

brought life, salvation, joy once more to the old mill!

HAZEL. (*Rises and starts to go, right.*) Oh, Mr. Rodney, don't kneel to me, don't speak to me! Let me go, let me go, and carry the misery and shame I bring, away from here, forever!

RODNEY. (*Stopping her.*) Let you go now? Never! You bring misery and shame here? No, no, girl, that 's not true, that 's not true!

HAZEL. Oh, but you do not know!

RODNEY. Yes, child, I know all. I know that a villain wronged ye, but the friend's heart, the mother's arms, the father's home all are open to ye now.

HAZEL. Mr. Rodney, you don't know what you say. My father but now, a moment ago, declared he would never own me in this world again. To-morrow he leaves this dear old mill, driven by my broken promise, by my shame.

RODNEY. What, quit the mill, girl? No, that shall never be.

HAZEL. Ah, sir, who can prevent it now?

RODNEY. You, girl, you.

HAZEL. I? Impossible! He would never accept a service from me, now.

RODNEY. Yes, girl, one service, one that would pay his debt to me a thousandfold.

HAZEL. What service is that?

RODNEY. Keep the old promise; become my wife.

HAZEL. (*Amazed.*) Oh, Mr. Rodney, and would you marry me, now?

RODNEY. Yes, and be the proudest man on earth to call you wife.

HAZEL. (*Turns from him.*) Oh, sir!—I—

RODNEY. (*Takes her hand.*) I know all ye 'd say, child: your heart has been another's—you could never give me a wife's love. Why, Hazel, dear, I do not ask it. If you will but marry me, it 's only as a beloved daughter I will hold ye, a daughter I shall have the right to cherish and to guard.

HAZEL. (*Leaving him.*) Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?

RODNEY. Be brave, girl; marry me, save your father—bless your mother—bring happiness to us all once more; speak—promise you 'll do this.

HAZEL. Yes, on one condition.

RODNEY. And what is that, child?

HAZEL. (*Utterly heart-broken.*) Call my father—he is blind—he cannot see me. If he consents to let me pay his debt to you, you shall have my hand, and I will be your wife.

RODNEY. (*Kissing her hand.*) Noble girl! Heaven will reward ye for this resolution. I 'll call your father instantly. Wait here.—You 'll see—all will yet be well.

(*Exit, left. The wind sounds.*)

HAZEL. Another promise I have made this noble man. This time I 'll keep my word in spite of my own miserable heart.

(*Enter* RODNEY *and* DUNSTAN *together.*)

DUNSTAN. Why, Maister Rodney, is that you, sir? How did ye get in? The door was bolted.

(HAZEL *places a chair for* DUNSTAN.)

RODNEY. Some good angel must have drawn the bolt, then; but enough of that. You sent for me. I was delayed. I am here at last. Tell me, what 's the good word to-night, Dunstan?

DUNSTAN. (*Sitting.*) Maister Rodney, you 've been a good friend to us. For eight long years I 've been in debt to ye—a debt I thought my child would pay, but—well, when she broke her faith and left us, I strove hard to make the old mill earn enough to pay the money that I owed ye. Fever laid hold on me and left me blind; all hope of work for me is over now. And I have but one way to pay my debt, and that is to gi' ye up the mill.

RODNEY. (*Leaning over* DUNSTAN'S *chair.*) And do ye think I 'll take it?

DUNSTAN. Yes, for I shall leave it. I owe ye too much a'ready; I an' mine have wronged ye every way. I 'll do penance for my child as a beggar in the street.

RODNEY. No, no, Dunstan. Let Hazel do penance for herself; let all be as it was; let her pay your debt by marrying me.

DUNSTAN. She, marry you?

RODNEY. Aye, why not? you know she 's free.

(HAZEL *gradually sinks down in front of* DUNSTAN.)

DUNSTAN. Free of what? Of stains o' shame?

RODNEY. Come, come, sir, no more o' that.

DUNSTAN. No, no, sir, she can never pay debt o' mine.

RODNEY. Dunstan, will you hear me—

DUNSTAN. No, no, not one word! (HAZEL *kneels before him.*) If she were now before my very face, kneeling at my feet, prayin' for my consent to marry ye, I 'd tell her nay, never! I 'd tell her she had wronged ye bad enough wi'out seeking to

make ye the hoosband of a dishonored creetur like herself.

(*The wind moans.* HAZEL *falls to the ground.*)

RODNEY. (*Raising her.*) Silence, hard-hearted man! Silence, for fear the curse of heaven may fall upon your iron will, and break its strength forever.

(*He places* HAZEL *in chair.*)

DUNSTAN. Mr. Rodney, I only do my duty, sir, to you and my own pride.

RODNEY. So you 'll not consent to have her marry me?

DUNSTAN. Never!

RODNEY. Very well, then, I'll do all I can to induce her to marry me without your consent.

DUNSTAN. A'reet, sir, a'reet! Good-night, Maister Rodney; if you have no objection, I 'll see ye out now and bolt the door.

(*He rises and starts for the door.*)

RODNEY. (*Intercepts and leads him left.*) Not yet; go call Mercy and bid her come here.

DUNSTAN. Mercy? What do ye want o' her?

RODNEY. Good advice, that you can neither give nor take.

DUNSTAN. A'reet, sir. I 'll tell Mercy that you want to speak to her, but mind this—Mercy has given her word not to set eyes upon her child wi'out my consent. I warn ye she 'll not lie; no, not even to please you, Maister Rodney, and so good-night. Good-night, Maister Rodney, good-night. (*Exit.*)

RODNEY. (*Going to* HAZEL, *who sits dazed in chair.*) Oh, heart of iron! Hazel, don't mind that now. All the world knows that a mother's love—Hazel, Hazel, dear! (*He touches her. She starts as if in dream.*) Hazel! Hazel, child, in heaven's name speak to me!

HAZEL. (*Rising.*) Mr. Rodney, do you love me still?

RODNEY. More than life—or all the world—but as a father, Hazel, dear, a father, and no other way.

HAZEL. If you love me, leave me—let me alone tonight; tomorrow will settle all for the best, I hope.

RODNEY. Must I leave you, then?

HAZEL. If you care for my happiness.

RODNEY. But we 'll meet again?

HAZEL. I hope so—(*He kisses her hand. She murmurs aside*) in heaven.

RODNEY. Then, good-night, my darling; your mother 's coming; you can rest on her heart and be at peace. Good-night, Hazel! May pitying angels guard and bless you. (*Exit, right.*)

HAZEL. All is over; I know the worst now, and I know what I must do. I 'll go, and there in the water that has brought so much misery to this home, I 'll drown my sorrows and my sins. (*Going.*) Good-bye, old home—farewell, sweet memories, fond hopes—farewell, mother, father, life—life—life!

(*She goes out. The wind moans louder. After a pause,* DUNSTAN *speaks outside.*)

DUNSTAN. Mercy, Mercy, where be ye?

(*Entering.*)

Why don't ye answer me? Mercy has gone, Maister Rodney; where can she be? Oh, why don't ye answer? No one here, the house deserted! What can it mean? —Maister Rodney, Maister Rodney!

MET. (*Outside.*) Help! help! She 's drowning! Drowning! Hazel 's drowning! I saw her jump in—it 's Hazel, Hazel! (*Rushing across at back.*) Hurry, help, help!

DUNSTAN. (*In horror.*) Hazel, drowning! Dying! Here, before my face? No, no, I 'll save her! Ah, heaven! I cannot! I am blind! (*Falling on his knees.*) Oh, God! this is thy punishment! I was blind when I drove her out —and now, when I could save her—I cannot see—I cannot see—I cannot see!

(*He falls to the ground.*)

ACT FOURTH.

SCENE. *Same as Act Third; morning; the fire is out, the table cleared, a jug of water and a mug on the table.* DOLLY *discovered asleep in a chair, near the table, head in arms.*

(*Enter* GREEN, *smoking a cigarette, and singing a line of "Molly Bawn."*)

GREEN. (*Calls gently.*) Doll! Dolly! Dolly don't answer; Dolly 's in heaven now. Sleep is a delightful don't-care-a-ducat sort of state, and yet who would sleep always? Not I—nor shall she. How lovely she looks—yes, a veritable sleeping beauty; but her time has come—the prince is here, and will wake her with

a kiss. Will you permit me? Of course she will. (*He kisses her.* DOLLY *makes motion as though brushing away a fly.*) She takes me for a fly—I'll fly it again. (*He kisses her.*) She's the kind of a fish that won't rise at a fly. Fire in the shape of a kiss is a failure—we'll try what smoke will do.

(*He puffs smoke in her face.*)

DOLLY. (*Awakes with a sneeze.*) Pah!—smoke! Where's the fire?

GREEN. (*Leans against the table.*) Here—here—in my breast—consuming my heart for you.

DOLLY. (*Going to him.*) Oh, Pittacus, I'm so glad you've come! I have so much to tell you! Such queer things have happened.

GREEN. Strange! Let's hear it. I adore queer things—that's why I adore you.

(*Embraces her.*)

DOLLY. No nonsense now; listen, and explain if you can.

GREEN. I can explain everything—except the power a woman has to make a donkey of a man.

DOLLY. No nonsense now. Last night, after I returned from my meeting with you—when you told me all about my poor dear Hazel— (*She wipes her eyes.*)

GREEN. Well?

DOLLY. I found Uncle Dunstan lying here—unconscious—on the floor. I was terribly frightened—called for help—there was no one in the house—even Aunt Mercy had disappeared—gone off to Squire Rodney's house, to meet that crazy creature, Met.

GREEN. What did you do?

DOLLY. You won't believe me when I tell you.

GREEN. I dare say I won't, but tell me to fill in the time.

DOLLY. Well, sir, I dragged that big man into the other room and laid him on the lounge myself! There!

GREEN. The tale is a tough one, but—(*Takes her hand and arm; she throws up her arm; he feels her muscle.*) you may not now believe it—but I believe it now.

DOLLY. Aunt Mercy came in soon after; we worked for hours until we brought him to. We've been up with him all night long, for ever since he came to consciousness, he's been out of his head.

GREEN. Out of his head! What an unpleasant position for the rest of his body! Oh, I see, you mean out of his mind; that's nothing, when you're used to it as I am.

DOLLY. You are?

GREEN. Yes, and it's all your fault.

DOLLY. What do ye mean?

GREEN. It's very queer, but I have always noticed that, if you ever remarked it, it is a peculiar physiological fact, while a man may lose his mind without its affecting his heart—he can rarely have an affection of the heart, without running the risk of losing his mind. (*Embracing her.*) Now, I say, darling, did you ever feel as if you were losing your mind?

DOLLY. Never!

GREEN. That's because you've no mind to lose.

DOLLY. (*Pushing him off.*) Not on your account, sir.

(MERCY *appears left.*)

Hush—my aunt—

(GREEN *draws away, right.*)

MERCY. (*Looking back as she comes.*) At last he seems to be asleep. (*Turns and sees* GREEN.) What, you here, Mr. Green?

GREEN. (*Embarrassed.*) Well, madam—you may not believe it—but I rather think I am.

MERCY. And Hazel—my child—have you any news of her?

GREEN. (*Confused.*) Well, you see—that is— (*Aside to* DOLLY.) Does she know the truth?

DOLLY. Nothing from me.

MERCY. Well, sir—can't you answer me?

GREEN. Yes, of course—that is, I could if you—I—we—only knew what you meant.

MERCY. Ah, sir! Something terrible has happened.—I feel it in my heart—but I'm so dazed with grief, I can't quite make it out. Last night Met appeared; told me Hazel had left her husband and could not be found. I promised to join Met at Aaron Rodney's house. I went there late last night; neither Met nor Maister Rodney was there. I hurried home and found my husband dangerously ill. What happened while I was gone I cannot say, but I think Hazel must have come and—

GREEN and DOLLY. (*Together, eagerly.*) Well—well?

MERCY. I fear he heard her—had a fit of rage—drove her out again, and was struck down by the power of his passion.

GREEN. Impossible! If Hazel had been here she would not have gone without a word to you.

MERCY. It 's hard to think it, and yet I cannot tell—I cannot tell.

(*Enter* RODNEY.)

Ah, thank heaven! Maister Rodney, have you seen Hazel?

RODNEY. Certainly—here.

ALL. Here?

RODNEY. Last night. We were to meet again this morning.

MERCY. Where?

RODNEY. Here.

MERCY. Then she is coming!

RODNEY. Coming? Has she gone?

MERCY. We do not know.

GREEN. (*Starting.*) Good heavens! I have an idea.

DOLLY. What is it?

GREEN. I see it all.—She s' gone with her husband.

MERCY. Her husband!

GREEN. He came down here to look for her; when I returned to our lodgings last night he was not there. I did n't mind it, for ever since she left him he 's had a fashion of wandering out at night till very late.

RODNEY. Well—well—go on.

GREEN. When I awoke this morning, he was not in his room.

DUNSTAN. (*Inside; calling.*) Water, water!

MERCY. Hark—'t is Dunstan.

DUNSTAN. (*Appearing in doorway, followed by* JOE.) Water, water, water!

RODNEY. What does this mean?

MERCY. He 's raving again.

DUNSTAN. Water—quick, quick—I 'm burning up! I 'm burning up! (DOLLY *gives him water.*) This is the lake that burneth forever—remorse, remorse, remorse! (DOLLY *holds the glass for* DUNSTAN; *about to drink, he pauses; then puts the glass from him.*) Water—no, no—take it away—'t was water killed her.

RODNEY. What 's that he says?

DUNSTAN. Hark, I hear that cry again! Oh, God—save her—save her—she 's drowning, drowning!

ALL. Drowning?

DUNSTAN. Hush—not so loud—see how sweetly she is sleeping.

MERCY. (*With a cry.*) Ah! my child is drowned, drowned.

(*She falls on* RODNEY'S *breast.*)

RODNEY. No, no—it cannot be.

(*He supports* MERCY *to a chair near the fireplace.*)

DUNSTAN. Hush, not so loud, you 'll wake her! Yes, she was drowned! I did it—I held her till she died—I could n't help it. Something forced me on. What was it? What was it? This hard, hard, hard heart of mine!

RODNEY. Horrible! Horrible!

(DOLLY *sobs.*)

DUNSTAN. See, see! there she goes to the mill—she beckons me! Quite right, lass; quite right, lass. Yes, yes—I 'm cooming, cooming, cooming! (*He starts toward the right;* JOE *leads him.*) Yes, take me to the mill, take me to the mill! The noise there will drown the awful voices here, here, here!

(*Striking his forehead, he goes out with* JOE.)

RODNEY. (*Aside.*) And this is the bitter end of all! No, no; there 's something still to do. (*To* GREEN.) There is a duty here for you and for me.—Let us go.

MERCY. (*Starting up.*) Where are ye going?

RODNEY. To search for Hazel—there!

(*He points off. Outside* MET'S *pipe plays merrily. All start and listen.*)

MERCY. Hark! 'T is Met, 't is Met! and he has news of her.

(*She hastens to the door.*)

(MET. *rushes in.*)

ALL. Hazel—where 's Hazel?

MET. She 's saved!

ALL. Saved?

MET. Yes, by her husband.

ALL. Her husband?

MERCY. Where is she, lad? Where is she?

MET. Coming here with him. God bless him! God bless him!

GREEN. How did he save her?

MET. Last night, when she fell in the river —I called for help and jumped in. The river was runnin' strong, and when I caught her in my arms, she was unconscious. I was growin' faint and beginnin' to despair—when I saw a man standin' on the bank. I shouted; he heard, and plunged in—

ALL. Go on, brave boy—go on!

MET. It was Hazel's husband—and, ah—it 's a stout heart, and a strong arm he has. He landed us both near Farmer Woodford's house. There he took Hazel, and there he nursed her back to life—as she had nursed him a year before.

MERCY. Thank heaven—thank heaven!

(*She weeps for joy.*)

(HAZEL *appears at right, followed by* ARTHUR.)

HAZEL. (*Holding out her arms.*) Mother! Mother!

ALL. Hazel!

MERCY. (*Embracing her.*) My child—precious child!

(*All gather round them with delight,* MET. *dancing ecstatically.*)

GREEN. Ah—will you permit me?

(*He kisses* HAZEL'S *hand.*)

RODNEY. (*To* ARTHUR.) You've won her now, sir, and I can't help believing you mean to right her wrongs.

ARTHUR. Ah, sir, how can I right such wrongs as hers?

RODNEY. By making her indeed your wife.

ARTHUR. (*Handing him a letter.*) My answer to that is this. (RODNEY *takes the letter and goes to the window.*) Oh, Green, this is a happy day, but I thank heaven my mother never lived to see it.

GREEN. Why do you say that?

ARTHUR. I told you of the shame that was overhanging our house?

GREEN. You did.

ARTHUR. Well, I ordered my solicitor to settle my estate, and satisfy every claim of Lady Maud's against my father, if it took the last penny I had in the world. He observed my orders, and there remains to me now—nothing.

GREEN. Nothing?

ARTHUR. Nothing but my own hands; my own brains, and the endless wealth of my love for her. (*He points at* HAZEL.)

GREEN. (*Grasping his hand.*) Travers, I congratulate you. You're above a lord now—you're every inch a man.

RODNEY. (*Coming forward.*) Ah, my friends! Can this be possible? Here is indeed cause for rejoicing. From this letter I gather that the inn at which the ceremony was performed was not on the English, but on the Scottish side of the border; therefore your marriage with Hazel was a legal one after all, and it seems that Barney, the scoundrel, was the only one to blame.

(*He embraces* HAZEL.)

GREEN. Oh, no, don't blame Barney, but blame the world that educated him. We ought to be satisfied that he did not put it on the Irish side of the border.

DUNSTAN. (*Inside.*) Save her! Do ye hear me? Save her!

HAZEL. Hark! What's that?

DUNSTAN. (*Inside.*) Where is she? Where is she?

MERCY. Oh, Hazel, it is your father.

HAZEL. He will not drive me out again?

MERCY. No, no; he shall not; he cannot do it now.

DUNSTAN. (*Appearing at the door, followed by* JOE *and* DAN.) Let me get at her, let me get at her! Fools, stand back—give her air—air!

HAZEL. Heaven help me! he's mad, mad! What shall we do, what shall we do?

RODNEY. Sing the song you used to sing to him so long ago—it may calm his wretched soul and soothe his brain.

(HAZEL *sings.*)

DUNSTAN. (*Stands listening.*) Her voice—from heaven—singing to me the old song! No, it's gone; I hear her shriek for help—it's Hazel! She's drowning—let me out of this! Where's the door? Bring me a light—a light!

(HAZEL *takes his hand.*)

MERCY. (*Comes to them.*) Have patience, poor heart, have patience.

DUNSTAN. (*Mistaking* HAZEL *for* MERCY.) Who be that, Mercy,—thee?

MERCY. Aye, Dunstan, I be here at thy side.

DUNSTAN. I'm glad thee's coom—but why did n't thee bring a light? I'm so weary o' this darkness.

(ARTHUR *brings a chair.*)

MERCY. Patience, dear heart, the light will coom—the light will coom.

DUNSTAN. Aye, Mercy, wife, thee always brings the light to my heart, my faithful, loving wife.

(ARTHUR *and* HAZEL *place* DUNSTAN *in the chair.* HAZEL *returns to* MERCY.)

MERCY. No, no, Dunstan, don't say that, for I have a sin to confess to thee.

DUNSTAN. (*Sitting.*) Thee—a sin to confess to me? I'll not believe it.

MERCY. It's true, Dunstan; I've broken my promise to thee.

DUNSTAN. Broken thy promise?

MERCY. I've seen our child—wi'out thy consent.

DUNSTAN. (*Starting up.*) Seen Hazel! Yes, yes, I know—I know—thee's seen her poor dead face—thee's not seen her. No, she's there—above—praying to God to forgive me—forgive me—forgive me.

MERCY. No, Dunstan, no, it's not her body alone I've seen, but her soul too, shining in her eyes, wi' living love for thee—her feyther.

DUNSTAN. (*Rising.*) Then she's alive—saved!

MERCY. (*Goes to* DUNSTAN; HAZEL *kneels before him.* ARTHUR *stands behind him.*) Aye, Dunstan, by her hoosband. The man who took her from thee has brought her back to thy old arms.

DUNSTAN. Where is she? Where is she?

MERCY. Stretch forth thy hands and feel her face.

DUNSTAN. (*Feeling her face.*) Who's this?

HAZEL. Thy child—thine only child.

DUNSTAN. (*With a cry falls back in the chair, dragging her upon his breast.*) Hazel, Hazel, coom to my heart! My child, my child!

RODNEY. At last, Dunstan, the iron of thy will has melted in the fire of a father's love.

DOLLY. (*Embraces* GREEN.) Oh, Pittacus, my happiness is perfect now!

GREEN. You may not believe it, but so is mine—No, stop—not quite.

(*He steps forward, speaking to the audience.*)

Will you permit me?—Thank you.—
'T was our way,
From earliest time, of winding up a play;
A kindly custom,—actors know its worth,
Peace after pain, and after sadness, mirth.
You 've seen tonight a conscientious man
Offend his soul as only conscience can;
You 've seen the sufferings that he caused and felt
Ere yet his iron will was forced to melt;
You guess the lesson we would fain instill,
That human heart is more than human will.
You 've dropped your tears, perhaps,—pray let me now beguile
Your friendly faces of one parting smile.
You 've seen me drifting through this troubled scene
And turning everything—well—turning one thing, (*taking* DOLLY'S *hand*) Green.
'T is nature's general and her favorite tint,
And therefore—well—I merely drop the hint—
Green though I am, I 've brought these lovers through,
And what I 've done for them I 'll do for you.
Don't brood on care—the trouble that you make
Is always hard to bear, and harder still to shake;
Smile on the world—the trouble that is sent
In patience take it as your punishment.
He wins who laughs—he does n't care a rap, he,
And so, like Pittacus, he 's always happy.

SHENANDOAH

BY

Bronson Howard

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SHENANDOAH

Shenandoah represents the Civil War play. It also represents the work of playwright who illustrates in his career the development of modern American drama. Bronson Crocker Howard was born in Detroit, Michigan, October 1842, the son of Charles Howard, a merchant of Detroit, who was at one time ayor of the city. After being educated at the local schools in Detroit, he pred for Yale College, but did not enter, owing to eye trouble. He began newsper work in Detroit, and wrote plays. The first of these to be performed was dramatization of an episode in *Les Miserables* under the title of *Fantine,* which s played in Detroit in 1864. In 1865 Mr. Howard came to New York and ter he had had the usual struggles to obtain a hearing, Augustin Daly put on *ratoga* at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, December 21, 1870. The play was a great ccess, running one hundred and one nights. It is a comedy, bordering on farce, flecting the manners of 1870 and concerned with the adventures of Bob Sackett, o is engaged to be married to four girls at once. It was adapted for the English stage by Frank Marshall and produced by Sir Charles (then Mr.) Wyndm under the title of *Brighton* at the Court Theatre, London, May 25, 1874. ter Mr. Wyndham played it in Germany in a German translation.

Diamonds, a comedy, produced in New York September 26, 1872, and *Moorft or The Double Wedding,* a comedy, played in New York, October 17, 1874, d partly suggested by a short story by John Hay, were not so significant as *The nker's Daughter,* produced first at Hooley's Theatre, Chicago, September 4, 73, as *Lillian's Last Love,* and under its final title at the Union Square Theatre, w York, September 30, 1878. This play, based on the theme of a woman's lf-sacrifice for her father's sake, through which she marries a man she does t love, still holds the stage. An interesting account of the building of this ay is given in Mr. Howard's *The Autobiography of a Play.*

Next came in rapid succession, *Old Love Letters,* a charming one-act play, sed on the return of a package of letters between two former lovers, which as played at the Park Theatre, New York, August 31, 1878; *Hurricanes,* a medy produced first in Chicago at Hooley's Theatre, May 27, 1878, and later England under the title *Truth; Wives,* a comedy adapted from Molière's *Ecole s Femmes* and *Ecole des Maris,* played at Daly's Theatre, New York, October 18, 879, and *Fun in a Green Room,* a comedy played at Booth's Theatre, New York, pril 10, 1882. His next most significant play was *Young Mrs. Winthrop,* a udy of the estrangement of a husband and wife through circumstances and eir reconciliation through their child. It was first played at the Madison Square

Theatre, New York, October 9, 1882. A very successful comedy, *One of Our Girls,* the scene of which is laid in France, was first played at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, November 10, 1885. *Met by Chance,* a romantic play, performed at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, January 11, 1887, was not a success, but on September 26 of the same year *The Henrietta* began its career at the Union Square Theatre. This is a dramatization of the motives that move Wall Street and in it Mr. William H. Crane and Mr. Stuart Robson achieved one of the great successes of their joint careers. It was revived by Mr. Crane in 1913 after revision by Winchell Smith. *Baron Rudolf,* played originally in 1881, was revived in New York, October 25, 1887. *Shenandoah* came in 1888 and *Aristocracy,* a comedy in which social types, both national and international, are contrasted, was put on first at Palmer's Theatre, New York, November 14, 1892. *Peter Stuyvesant,* an historical comedy, written in collaboration with Mr. Brander Matthews, and played at Wallack's Theatre, New York, October 2, 1899, was the last play of Mr. Howard's to be performed. *Knave and Queen* and *Kate,* the latter a clever international play, have not been performed. Mr. Howard died at Avon, New Jersey, August 4, 1908.

Shenandoah, which he wrote at the height of his career, was first put on at the Boston Museum on November 19, 1888. It was based upon an earlier work which Mr. Howard had produced in Louisville, Kentucky, about twenty years before and at its first tryout in Boston it was not a success. After revision, however, it was brought out at the Star Theatre, New York, September 9, 1889, and ran in New York, during the entire season. It has proved to be the most popular of Mr. Howard's plays.

Saratoga (1870), and *Young Mrs. Winthrop* (1882), have been published by Samuel French. *Kate* was published in 1906 by Harper and Brothers. *The Henrietta* has been published in England by French, but in this country has been only privately printed. The same is true of *Old Love Letters, The Banker's Daughter, Shenandoah* and *Aristocracy.* The present text of *Shenandoah* is based on the privately printed edition prepared by Mr. Howard. It was furnished the editor by Samuel French through the courtesy of the Society of American Dramatists and Composers.

For biography of Mr. Howard, see the volume *In Memoriam—Bronson Howard,* published by the American Dramatists Club, New York, 1910. This contains a biography by H. P. Mawson, an appreciation by Brander Matthews, *The Autobiography of a Play* by Bronson Howard and a list of the plays with the original casts. *The Autobiography of a Play* has been reprinted with an introduction by Augustus Thomas in the *Publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University,* New York, 1915. See also *Plays of the Present,* ed. by J. B. Clapp and E. F. Edgett, New York, 1902, and *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* by A. H. Quinn, New York, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 39-65.

Of especial interest is the article on Bronson Howard in William Archer's *glish Dramatists of Today* (1882), in which Mr. Archer, while pointing out Howard's merits, accuses him of vulgarity for certain expressions in *Saratoga,* ch are not included in the play, and which were therefore, most probably in- ted by the English adaptor.

[FROM PREFACE TO SHENANDOAH]

In ACT I, just before the opening of the war, HAVERHILL is a Colonel in the gular Army. KERCHIVAL WEST and ROBERT ELLINGHAM are Lieutenants in regiment, having been classmates at West Point.

ACT I

CHARLESTON HARBOR IN 1861. AFTER THE BALL

The citizens of Charleston knew almost the exact hour at which the attack Fort Sumter would begin, and they gathered in the gray twilight of the rning to view the bombardment as a spectacle.—*Nicolay, Campaigns of the vil War, Vol. I.*

"I shall open fire in one hour."—*Beauregard's last message to Major An- rson. Sent at* 3:20 *A. M., April* 12, 1861.

ACTS II AND III

The Union Army, under General Sheridan, and the Confederate Army, der General Early, were encamped facing each other about twenty miles south Winchester, on Cedar Creek. * * * Gen. Sheridan was called to Washington. on after he left, a startling despatch was taken by our own Signal Officers om the Confederate Signal Station on Three Top Mountain.—*Pond, Camp. v. War, Vol. XI.*

On the morning of Oct. 19th, the Union Army was taken completely by rprise. Thoburn's position was swept in an instant. Gordon burst suddenly on the left flank. The men who escaped capture streamed through the camps ong the road to Winchester.—*Pond, supra.*

Far away in the rear was heard cheer after cheer.—*Three years in the Sixth prps.*

ACT IV

WASHINGTON, 1865. RESIDENCE OF GENERAL BUCKTHORN

I feel that we are on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony etween the Federal and Confederate.—*Gen Grant's Memoirs.*

CASTS OF SHENANDOAH

		Original Cast Boston Museum, Nov. 19, 1888	First New York Production Star Theatre, N.Y. September 9, 1889
General Haverhill	Officers of Sheridan's Cavalry	Thomas L. Coleman	Wilton Lackaye
Colonel Kerchival West.		John B. Mason	Henry Miller
Captain Heartsease		Henry M. Pitt	Morton Selton
Lieutenant Frank Bedloe		Edgar L. Davenport	G. W. Bailey
Major-General Francis Buckthorn, Commander of the 19th Army Corps		C. Leslie Allen	Harry Harwood
Sergeant Barket		George W. Wilson	James O. Barrows
Colonel Robert Ellingham, 10th Virginia		Charles J. Bell	Lucius Henderson
Captain Thornton, Secret Service, C. S. A.		Willis Granger	John E. Kellerd
Mrs. Constance Haverhill		Annie M. Clarke	Dorothy Dorr
Gertrude Ellingham		Viola Allen	Viola Allen
Madeline West		Helen Dayne	Nanette Comstock
Jenny Buckthorn		Miriam O'Leary	Effie Shannon
Mrs. Edith Haverhill		Grace Atwell	Alice B. Haines
Hardwick, Surgeon		George Blake	W. L. Dennison
Captain Lockwood, U. S. Signal Corps		Herbert Potter	C. C. Brandt
Lieutenant of Signal Corps			Harry Thorn
Lieutenant of Infantry			George Maxwell
Corporal Dunn		James Nolan	W. J. Cummings
Benson		Charles S. Abbe	William Barnes
Old Margery		Kate Ryan	Mrs. Haslam
Janette		Miss Harding	Esther Drew
Wilkins		Henry MacDonna	

SHENANDOAH

ACT FIRST.

CHARLESTON HARBOR IN 1861. "AFTER THE BALL."

SCENE. *The Interior of a Southern Residence on the shore of Charleston Harbor. Large double doors at the rear of the stage are open. A large, wide window, with low sill, extends down the right side of the stage. A veranda is seen through the doors and the window. There is a wide opening on the left with a corridor beyond. The furniture and appointments are quaint and old-fashioned, but the general tone of the walls and upholstery is that of the old Colonial period in its more ornamental and decorative phase, as shown in the early days of Charleston. Old candlesticks and candelabra, with lighted candles nearly burned down, light the room, and in addition the moon-light streams in. Beyond the central doors and the window there is a lawn, with Southern foliage, extending down to the shores of the harbor; a part of the bay lies in the distance, with low-lying land beyond. The lights of Charleston are seen over the water along the shore. The gray twilight of early morning gradually steals over the scene as the Act progresses. As the curtain rises,* KERCHIVAL WEST *is sitting in a chair, his feet extended and his head thrown back, a handkerchief over his face.* ROBERT ELLINGHAM *strolls in on the veranda, beyond the window, smoking. He looks to the right, starts and moves to the window; leans against the upper side of the window and looks across.*

ELLINGHAM. Kerchival!

KERCHIVAL. (*Under the handkerchief.*) Eh? H'm!

ELLING. Can you sleep at a time like this? My own nerves are on fire.

KER. Fire? Oh—yes—I remember. Any more fire-works, Bob?

ELLING. A signal rocket from one of the batteries, now and then. (*He goes up beyond the window.* KERCHIVAL *arouses himself, taking the handkerchief from his eyes.*)

KER. What a preposterous hour to be up. The ball was over an hour ago, all the guests are gone, and it's nearly four o'clock. (*Looking at his watch.*) Exactly ten minutes of four. (*He takes out a cigar.*) Our Southern friends assure us that General Beauregard is to open fire on Fort Sumter this morning. I don't believe it. (*Lighting the cigar and rising, he looks out through the window.*) There lies the old fort—solemn and grim as ever, and the flag-staff stands above it, like a warning finger. If they do fire upon it (*shutting his teeth for a moment and looking down at the cigar in his hand*) the echo of that first shot will be heard above their graves, and Heaven knows how many of our own, also; but the flag will still float!—over the graves of both sides.

(ELLINGHAM *enters from the central door and approaches him.*)

Are you Southerners all mad, Robert?

ELLING. Are you Northerners all blind? (KERCHIVAL *sits down.*) We Virginians would prevent a war if we could. But your people in the North do not believe that one is coming. You do not understand the determined frenzy of my fellow Southerners. Look! (*Pointing toward the rear of the stage.*) Do you see the lights of the city, over the water? The inhabitants of Charleston are gathering, even now, in the gray, morning twilight, to witness the long-promised bombardment of Fort Sumter. It is to be a gala day for them. They have talked and dreamed of nothing else for weeks. The preparations have become a part of their social life—of their amusement—their gayeties. This very night at the ball—here—in the house of my own relatives—what was their talk? What were the jests they laughed at? Sumter! War! Ladies were betting bonbons that the United States would not dare to fire a

shot in return, and pinning ribbons on the breasts of their "heroes." There was a signal rocket from one of the forts, and the young men who were dancing here left their partners standing on the floor to return to the batteries—as if it were the night before another Waterloo. The ladies themselves hurried away to watch the "spectacle" from their own verandas. You won't see the truth! I tell you, Kerchival, a war between the North and South is inevitable!

KER. And if it does come, you Virginians will join the rest.

ELLING. Our State will be the battle ground, I fear. But every loyal son of Virginia will follow her flag. It is our religion!

KER. My State is New York. If New York should go against the old flag, New York might go to the devil. That is my religion.

ELLING. So differently have we been taught what the word "patriotism" means!

KER. You and I are officers of the same regiment of the United States Regular Army, Robert; we were classmates at West Point, and we have fought side by side on the plains. You saved my scalp once; I'd have to wear a wig, now, if you had n't. I say, old boy, are we to be enemies?

ELLING. (*Laying his hand over his shoulder.*) My dear old comrade, whatever else comes, our friendship shall be unbroken!

KER. Bob! (*Looking up at him.*) I only hope that we shall never meet in battle!

ELLING. In battle? The idea is horrible!

KER. (*Rising and crossing to him.*) My dear old comrade, one of us will be wrong in this great fight, but we shall both be honest in it. (*He gives his hand;* ELLINGHAM *grasps it warmly, then turns away.*)

ELLING. Colonel Haverill is watching the forts, also; he has been as sad to-night as we have. Next to leaving you, my greatest regret is that I must resign from his regiment.

KER. You are his favorite officer.

ELLING. Naturally, perhaps; he was my guardian.

(*Enter* HAVERILL *from the rear. He walks down, stopping in the center of the stage.*)

HAVERILL. Kerchival! I secured the necessary passports to the North yesterday afternoon; this one is yours; I brought it down for you early in the evening. (KERCH. *takes the paper and goes to the window.*) I am ordered direct to Washington at once, and shall start with Mrs. Haverill this forenoon. You will report to Captain Lyon, of the 2d Regiment, in St. Louis. Robert! I have hoped for peace to the last, but it is hoping against hope. I feel certain, now, that the fatal blow will be struck this morning. Our old regiment is already broken up, and you, also, will now resign, I suppose, like nearly all your fellow Southerners in the Service.

ELLING. You know how sorry I am to leave your command, Colonel!

HAVER. I served under your father in Mexico; he left me, at his death, the guardian of you and your sister, Gertrude. Even since you became of age, I have felt that I stood in his place. But you must be your sister's only guardian now. Your father fell in battle, fighting for our common country, but you—

ELLING. He would have done as I shall do, had he lived. He was a Virginian!

HAVER. I am glad, Robert, that he was never called upon to decide between two flags. He never knew but one, and we fought under it together. (*Exit.*)

ELLING. Kerchival! Something occurred in this house to-night which—which I should n't mention under ordinary circumstances, but I—I feel that it may require my further attention, and you, perhaps, can be of service to me. Mrs. Haverill, the wife of the Colonel—

KER. Fainted away in her room.

ELLING. You know?

KER. I was one of the actors in the little drama.

ELLING. Indeed!

KER. About half-past nine this evening, while the ladies were dressing for the ball, I was going upstairs; I heard a quick, sharp cry, sprang forward, found myself at an open door. Mrs. Haverill lay on the floor inside, as if she had just reached the door to cry for help, when she fell. After doing all the unnecessary and useless things I could think of, I rushed out of the room to tell your sister, Gertrude, and my own sister, Madeline, to go and take care of the lady. Within less than twenty minutes afterwards, I saw Mrs. Haverill sail into the drawing-room, a

ing of beauty, and with the glow of erfect health on her cheek. It was an mense relief to me when I saw her. p to that time I had a vague idea that I ad committed a murder.

ING. Murder!

. M—m. A guilty conscience. Every an, of course, does exactly the wrong ing when a woman faints. When I shed out of Mrs. Haverill's room, I ft my handkerchief soaked with water on her face. I must ask her for it, it 's silk one. Luckily, the girls got there time to take it off; she would n't have me to if they had n't. It never oc- rred to me that she 'd need to breathe in y absence. That 's all I know about e matter. What troubles you? I sup- ose every woman has a right to faint henever she chooses. The scream that heard was so sharp, quick and intense hat—

ING. That the cause must have been a rious one.

. Yes! So I thought. It must have een a mouse.

ING. Mr. Edward Thornton has occu- ied the next room to that of Mrs. laverill to-night.

. (*Quickly.*) What do you mean?

ING. During the past month or more e has been pressing, not to say insolent, his attentions to Mrs. Haverill.

. I 've noticed that myself.

ING. And he is an utterly unscrupu- us man; it is no fault of mine that he as asked to be a guest at this house to- ight. He came to Charleston, some ears ago, from the North, but if there re any vices and passions peculiarly trong in the South, he has carried them ll to the extreme. In one of the many candals connected with Edward Thorn- on's name, it was more than whispered hat he entered a lady's room unex- ectedly at night. But, as he killed the ady's husband in a duel a few days after- vards, the scandal dropped.

R. Of course; the gentleman received mple satisfaction as an outraged hus- and, and Mr. Thornton apologized, I uppose, to his widow.

LING. He has repeated the adventure.

R. Do—you—think—that?

LING. I was smoking on the lawn, and glanced up at the window; my eyes may ave deceived me, and I must move cau- iously in the matter; but it could n't have een imagination; the shadow of Edward Thornton's face and head appeared upon the curtain.

KER. Whew! The devil!

ELLING. Just at that moment I, too, heard the stifled scream.

(*Enter* EDWARD THORNTON.)

THORNTON. Gentlemen!

ELLING. Your name was just on my tongue, Mr. Thornton.

THORNTON. I thought I heard it, but you are welcome to it. Miss Gertrude has asked me to ride over to Mrs. Pinckney's with her, to learn if there is any further news from the batteries. I am very glad the time to attack Fort Sumter has come at last!

ELLING. I do not share your pleasure.

THORNTON. You are a Southern gentleman.

ELLING. And you are a Northern "gentleman."

THORNTON. A Southerner by choice; I shall join the cause.

ELLING. We native Southerners will defend our own rights, sir; you may leave them in our keeping. It is my wish, Mr. Thornton, that you do not accompany my sister.

THORNTON. Indeed!

ELLING. Her groom, alone, will be sufficient

THORNTON. As you please, sir. Kindly offer my excuses to Miss Gertrude. You and I can chat over the subject later in the day, when we are alone. (*Moving up the stage.*)

ELLING. By all means, and another subject, also, perhaps.

THORNTON. I shall be entirely at your service. (*Exit to the veranda.*)

ELLING. Kerchival, I shall learn the whole truth, if possible, to-day. If it is what I suspect—what I almost know—I will settle with him myself. He has insulted our Colonel's wife and outraged the hospitality of my friends. (*Walking to the right.*)

KER. (*Walking to the left.*) I think it ought to be my quarrel. I 'm sure I 'm mixed up in it enough.

MADELINE. (*Without, calling.*) Kerchival!

ELLING. Madeline. (*Aside, starting,* KERCHIVAL *looks across at him sharply.*)

KER. (*Aside.*) I distinctly saw Bob give a start when he heard Madeline. Now, what can there be about my sister's voice to make a man jump like that?

GERT. (*Without.*) Brother Robert!

KER. Gertrude! (*Aside, starting,* ELLINGHAM *looks at him sharply.*) How the tones of a woman's voice thrill through a man's soul!

(*Enter* MADELINE.)

MADELINE. Oh, Kerchival—here you are.

(*Enter* GERTRUDE, *from the apartment, in a riding habit, with a whip.*)

GERT. Robert, dear! (*Coming down to* ROBERT; *they converse in dumb show.*)

MADELINE. Where are your field glasses? I've been rummaging all through your clothes, and swords, and sashes, and things. I've turned everything in your room upside down.

KER. Have you?

MADELINE. I can't find your glasses anywhere. I want to look at the forts. Another rocket went up just now. (*Runs up the stage and stands on the piazza looking off.*)

KER. A sister has all the privileges of a wife to upset a man's things, without her legal obligation to put them straight again. (*Glances at* GERTRUDE.) I wish Bob's sister had the same privileges in my room that my own has.

GERT. Mr. Thornton is n't going with me, you say?

ELLING. He requested me to offer you his apologies.

KER. May *I* accompany you? (ELLINGHAM *turns to the window on the right.*)

GERT. My groom, old Pete, will be with me, of course; there 's no particular need of anyone else. But you may go along, if you like. I've got my hands full of sugar plums for Jack. Dear old Jack—he always has his share when we have company. I'm going over to Mrs. Pinckney's to see if she 's had any more news from General Beauregard; her son is on the General's staff.

MADELINE. (*Looking off to the right.*) There 's another rocket from Fort Johnson; and it is answered from Fort Moultrie. Ah! (*Angrily.*) General Beauregard is a bad, wicked man! (*Coming down.*)

GERT. Oh! Madeline! You are a bad, wicked Northern girl to say such a thing.

MAD. I *am* a Northern girl.

GERT. And I am a Southern girl. (*They face each other.*)

KER. (*Dropping into a chair.*) The war has begun.

(ELLINGHAM *has turned from the window; he strolls across the stage, watching the girls.*)

GERT. General Beauregard is a patriot.

MAD. He is a Rebel.

GERT. So am I.

MAD. Gertrude!—You—you—

GERT. Madeline!—You—

MAD. I—I—

GERT. I—

BOTH. O—O-h! (*Bursting into tears and rushing into each other's arms, sobbing, then suddenly kissing each other vigorously.*)

KER. I say, Bob, if the North and South do fight, that will be the end of it.

GERT. I've got something to say to you, Madeline, dear. (*Confidentially and turning with her arms about her waist. The girls sit down talking earnestly.*)

ELLING. Kerchival, old boy! There 's—there 's something I'd like to say to you before we part to-day.

KER. I'd like a word with you, also!

MAD. You don't really mean that, Gertrude—with me?

ELLING. I'm in love with your sister Madeline.

KER. The devil you are!

ELLING. I never suspected such a thing until last night.

GERT. Robert was in love with you six weeks ago. (MADELINE *kisses her.*)

KER. *I've* made a discovery, too, Bob.

MAD. *I've* got something to say to *you*, Gertrude.

KER. I'm in love with *your* sister.

ELLING. (*Astonished.*) You are?

MAD. Kerchival has been in love with you for the last three months. (GERTRUDE *offers her lips—they kiss.*)

KER. I fell in love with her the day before yesterday. (*The two gentlemen grasp each other's hands warmly.*)

ELLING. We understand each other, Kerchival. (*He turns up the stage and stops at the door.*) Miss Madeline, you said just now that you wished to watch the forts. Would you like to walk down to the shore?

MAD. Yes! (*Rising and going up to him. He takes one of her hands in his own and looks at her earnestly.*)

ELLING. This will be the last day that we shall be together, for the present. But we shall meet again—sometime—if we both live.

MAD. If we both live! You mean—if *you*

e. You must go into this dreadful war, it comes.

ING. Yes, Madeline, I must. Come let watch for our fate.

(*Exeunt to the veranda.*)

. (*Aside.*) I must leave Charles- n to-day. (*He sighs.*) Does she love e?

. I am ready to start, Mr. West, when ou are.

. Oh! Of course, I forgot. (*Ris- g.*) I shall be delighted to ride at your de.

T. At my side! (*Rising.*) There n't a horse in America that can keep y the side of my Jack, when I give him s head, and I 'm sure to do it. You may ollow us. But you can hardly ride in at costume; while you are changing it, 'll give Jack his bonbons. (*Turning to e window.*) There he is, bless him! awing the ground, and impatient for me be on his back. Let him come, Pete. (*Holding up bonbons at window.*) I ve you.

. Eh? (*Turning suddenly.*)

T. (*Looking at him.*) What?

. You were saying—

T. Jack! (*Looking out. The head of large black horse appears through the indow.*) You dear old fellow. (*She eeds him with bonbons.*) Jack has been y boy ever since he was a little colt. I rought you up, did n't I, Jack? He 's he truest, and kindest, and best of riends; I would n't be parted from him or the world, and I 'm the only woman e 'll allow to be near him.

. (*Earnestly.*) You are the only oman, Miss Gertrude, that I—

T. Dear Jack!

. (*Aside.*) Jack embarrasses me. Ie 's a third party.

T. There! That will do for the pres- nt, Jack. Now go along with Pete! If ou are a very good boy, and don't let ieutenant Kerchival West come within a uarter of a mile of me, after the first hree minutes, you shall have some more ugar plums when we get to Mrs. Pinck- ney's. (*An old negro leads the horse way.* GERTRUDE *looks around at* KER- CHIVAL.) You have n't gone to dress, et; we shall be late. Mrs. Pinckney asked a party of friends to witness the ombardment this morning, and break- fast together on the piazza while they are ooking at it. We can remain and join hem, if you like.

KER. I hope they won't wait for breakfast until the bombardment begins.

GERT. I 'll bet you an embroidered cigar-case, Lieutenant, against a box of gloves that it will begin in less than an hour.

KER. Done! You will lose the bet. But you shall have the gloves; and one of the hands that go inside them shall be—(*Taking one of her hands; she withdraws it.*)

GERT. My own—until some one wins it. You don't believe that General Beauregard will open fire on Fort Sumter this morning?

KER. No; I don't.

GERT. Everything is ready.

KER. It 's so much easier to get everything ready to do a thing than it is to do it. I have been ready a dozen times, this very night, to say to you, Miss Gertrude, that I—that I— (*Pauses.*)

GERT. (*Looking down and tapping her skirt with her whip.*) Well?

KER. But I did n't.

GERT. (*Glancing up at him suddenly.*) I dare say, General Beauregard has more nerve than you have.

KER. It is easy enough to set the batteries around Charleston Harbor, but the man who fires the first shot at a woman—

GERT. Woman!

KER. At the American flag—must have nerves of steel.

GERT. You Northern men are so slow, to—

KER. I have been slow; but I assure you, Miss Gertrude, that my heart—

GERT. What subject are we on now?

KER. You were complaining because I was too slow.

GERT. I was doing nothing of the kind, sir!—let me finish, please. You Northern men are so slow, to believe that our Southern heroes—Northern *men* and Southern *heroes*—you recognize the distinction I make—you won't believe that they will keep their promises. They have sworn to attack Fort Sumter this morning, and—they—will do it. This "American Flag" you talk of is no longer our flag: it is foreign to us!—It is the flag of an enemy!

KER. (*Tenderly and earnestly.*) Am I your enemy?

GERT. You have told me that you will return to the North, and take the field.

KER. Yes, I will. (*Decisively.*)

GERT. You will be fighting against my friends, against my own brother, against me. We *shall* be enemies.

KER. (*Firmly.*) Even that, Gertrude—(*She looks around at him, he looks squarely into her eyes as he proceeds*)—if you will have it so. If my country needs my services, I shall not refuse them, though it makes us enemies! (*She wavers a moment, under strong emotion, and turns away; sinks upon the seat, her elbow on the back of it, and her tightly-clenched fist against her cheek, looking away from him.*)

GERT. I will have it so! I am a Southern woman!

KER. We have more at stake between us, this morning, than a cigar-case and a box of gloves. (*Turning up the stage.*)

(*Enter* MRS. HAVERILL *from apartment.*)

MRS. H. Mr. West! I've been looking for you. I have a favor to ask.

KER. Of me?—with pleasure.

MRS. H. But I am sorry to have interrupted you and Gertrude. (*As she passes down* KERCHIVAL *moves up the stage.* GERTRUDE *rises.*) (*Apart.*) There are tears in your eyes, Gertrude, dear!

GERT. (*Apart.*) They have no right there.

MRS. H. (*Apart.*) I'm afraid I know what has happened. A quarrel! and you are to part with each other so soon. Do not let a girl's coquetry trifle with her heart until it is too late. You remember the confession you made to me last night?

GERT. (*Apart.*) Constance! (*Starting.*) That is my secret; more a secret now than ever.

MRS. H. (*Apart.*) Yes, dear; but you do love him. (GERTRUDE *moves up the stage.*)

GERT. You need not ride over with me, Mr. West.

KER. I can be ready in one moment.

GERT. I choose to go alone! Old Pete will be with me; and Jack, himself, is a charming companion.

KER. If you prefer Jack's company to mine—

GERT. I do. (*Exit on the veranda.*)

KER. Damn Jack! But you will let me assist you to mount. (*Exit after her.*)

MRS. H. We leave for the North before noon, but every hour seems a month. If my husband should learn what happened in my room to-night, he would kill that man. What encouragement could I have given him? Innocence is never on its guard—but, (*drawing up*) the last I remember before I fell unconscious, he was crouching before me like a whipped cur! (*She starts as she looks out of the window.*) There is Mr. Thornton, now—Ah! (*Angrily.*) No—I must control my own indignation. I must keep him and Colonel Haverill from meeting before we leave Charleston. Edward Thornton would shoot my husband down without remorse. But poor Frank! I must not forget him, in my own trouble. I have but little time left to care for his welfare.

(*Re-enter* KERCHIVAL.)

KER. You said I could do you a favor, Mrs. Haverill?

MRS. H. Yes, I wanted to speak with you about General Haverill's son, Frank. I should like you to carry a message to Charleston for me as soon as it is light. It is a sad errand. You know too well the great misfortune that has fallen upon my husband in New York.

KER. His only son has brought disgrace upon his family name, and tarnished the reputation of a proud soldier. Colonel Haverill's fellow officers sympathize with him most deeply.

MRS. H. And poor young Frank! I could hardly have loved the boy more if he had been my own son. If he had not himself confessed the crime against the bank, I could not have believed him guilty. He has escaped from arrest. He is in the City of Charleston. I am the only one in all the world he could turn to. He was only a lad of fourteen when his father and I were married, six years ago; and the boy has loved me from the first. His father is stern and bitter now in his humiliation. This note from Frank was handed to me while the company were here last evening. I want you to find him and arrange for me to meet him, if you can do it with safety. I shall give you a letter for him.

KER. I'll get ready at once; and I will do all I can for the boy.

MRS. H. And—Mr. West! Gertrude and Madeline have told me that—that—I was under obligations to you last evening.

KER. Don't mention it. I merely ran for them, and I—I'm very glad you did not choke—before they reached you. I trust you are quite well now?

MRS. H. I am entirely recovered, thank you. And I will ask another favor of you, for we are old friends. I desire very much that General Haverill should not know that—that any accident

urred to me to-night—or that my health as not been perfect.

R. Certainly, madam!

. H. It would render him anxious without cause.

R. (*Aside.*) It looks as if Robert was ght; she does n't want the two men to eet.

ter HAVERILL, *a white silk handkerchief in his hand.*)

VER. Constance, my dear, I 've been all ver the place looking for you. I nought you were in your room. But—y the way, Kerchival, this is your hand-erchief; your initials are on it.

(KERCHIVAL *turns and stares at him a second.* MRS. HAVERILL *starts slightly and turns front.* HAVERILL *glances quickly from one to the other, then extends his hands toward* KERCHIVAL, *with the handkerchief.* KERCHIVAL *moves to him and takes it.* MRS. HAVERILL *drops into the chair.*)

R. Thank you. (*He walks up and exits with a quick glance back.* HAVERILL *looks at* MRS. HAVERILL, *who sits nervously, looking away. He then glances up after* KERCHIVAL. *A cloud comes over his face and he stands a second in thought. Then, with a movement as if brushing away a passing suspicion, he smiles pleasantly and approaches* MRS. H.; *leaning over her.*)

VER. My fair Desdemona! (*Smiling.*) found Cassio's handkerchief in your oom. Have you a kiss for me? (*She ooks up, he raises her chin with a finger nd kisses her.*) That 's the way I shall smother you.

S. H. (*Rising and dropping her head pon his breast.*) Husband!

VER. But what is this they have been elling me?

S. H. What have they said to you?

VER. There was something wrong with you in the early part of the evening; you are trembling and excited, my girl!

S. H. It was nothing, John; I—I—was ll, for a few moments, but I am well now.

VER. You said nothing about it to me.

S. H. Do not give it another thought.

VER. Was there anything besides your health involved in the affair? There was. (*Aside.*) How came this handkerchief in her room?

S. H. My husband! I do not want to say anything more—at—at present—about what happened to-night. There has never been a shadow between us—will you not trust me?

HAVER. Shadow! You stand in a bright light of your own, my wife; it shines upon my whole life—there can be no shadow there. Tell me as much or as little as you like, and in your own time. I am sure you will conceal nothing from me that I ought to know. I trust my honor and my happiness to you, absolutely.

MRS. H. They will both be safe, John, in my keeping. But there is something else that I wish to speak with you about; something very near to your heart—your son!

HAVER. My son!

MRS. H. He is in Charleston.

HAVER. And not—in prison? To me he is nowhere. I am childless.

MRS. H. I hope to see him to-day; may I not take him some kind word from you?

HAVER. My lawyers in New York had instructions to provide him with whatever he needed.

MRS. H. They have done so, and he wants for nothing; he asks for nothing, except that I will seek out the poor young wife—only a girl herself—whom he is obliged to desert, in New York.

HAVER. His marriage was a piece of reckless folly, but I forgave him that.

MRS. H. I am sure that it was only after another was dependent on him that the debts of a mere spendthrift were changed to fraud—and crime.

HAVER. You may tell him that I will provide for her.

MRS. H. And may I take him no warmer message from his father?

HAVER. I am an officer of the United States Army. The name which my son bears came to me from men who had borne it with honor, and I transmitted it to him without a blot. He has disgraced it, by his own confession.

MRS. H. *I* cannot forget the poor mother who died when he was born; her whose place I have tried to fill, to both Frank and to you. I never saw her, and she is sleeping in the old graveyard at home. But I am doing what she would do to-day, if she were living. No pride—no disgrace—could have turned her face from him. The care and the love of her son has been to me the most sacred duty which one woman can assume for another.

HAVER. You have fulfilled that duty, Constance. Go to my son! I would go with you, but he is a man now; he could not look into my eyes, and I could not trust myself. But I will send him something which a man will understand. Frank loves you as if you were his own mother; and I—I would like him to—to think tenderly of me, also. He will do it when he looks at this picture. (*Taking a miniature from his pocket.*)

MRS. H. Of me!

HAVER. I have never been without it one hour, before, since we were married. He will recognize it as the one that I have carried through every campaign, in every scene of danger on the Plains; the one that has always been with me. He is a fugitive from justice. At times, when despair might overcome him, this may give him nerve to meet his future life manfully. It has often nerved me, when I might have failed without it. Give it to him, and tell him that I send it. (*Giving her the miniature.*) I could not send a kinder message, and he will understand it. (*Turning, he stands a moment in thought.* THORNTON *appears at the window looking at them quietly, over his shoulder, a cigar in his hand.* MRS. HAVERILL *sees him, and starts with a suppressed breath, then looks at* HAVERILL, *who moves away. He speaks aside.*) My son! My son! We shall never meet again! (*Exit.*)

(MRS. H. *looks after him earnestly, then turns and looks at* THORNTON, *drawing up to her full height.* THORNTON *moves up the stage, beyond the window.*)

MRS. H. Will he dare to speak to me again?

(*Enter* THORNTON; *he comes down the stage quietly. He has thrown away the cigar.*)

THORN. Mrs. Haverill! I wish to offer you an apology.

MRS. H. I have not asked for one, sir!

THORN. Do you mean by that, that you will not accept one?

MRS. H. (*Aside.*) What can I say? (*Aloud.*) Oh, Mr. Thornton!—for my husband's sake, I—

THORN. Ah! You are afraid that your husband may become involved in an unpleasant affair. Your solicitude for his safety, madame, makes me feel that my offense to-night was indeed unpardonable. No gentleman can excuse himself for making such a mistake as I have made. I had supposed that it was Lieutenant Kerchival West, who—

MRS. H. What do you mean, sir?

THORN. But if it is your husband that stands between us—

MRS. H. Let me say this, sir: whatever I may fear for my husband, he fears nothing for himself.

THORN. He knows? (*Looking at her, keenly.*)

(*Enter* KERCHIVAL WEST, *now in riding suit.*)

(*He stops, looking at them.*) You are silent. Your husband does know what occurred to-night; that relieves my conscience. (*Lightly.*) Colonel Haverill and I can now settle it between us.

MRS. H. No, Mr. Thornton! My husband knows nothing, and, I beg of you, do not let this horrible affair go further. (*Sees* KERCHIVAL.)

KER. Pardon me. (*Stepping forward.*) I hope I am not interrupting you. (*Aside.*) It *was* Thornton. (*Aloud.*) You said you would have a letter for me to carry, Mrs. Haverill.

MRS. H. Yes, I—I will go up and write it at once. (*As she leaves she stops and looks back. Aside.*) I wonder how much he overheard.

KER. (*Quietly.*) I suppose eight o'clock will be time enough for me to go?

MRS. H. Oh, yes! (*glancing at him a moment*) —quite. (*Exit.*)

KER. (*Quietly.*) Mr. Thornton! you are a scoundrel! Do I make myself plain?

THORN. You make the fact that you desire to pick a quarrel with me quite plain, sir; but I choose my own quarrels and my own enemies.

KER. Colonel Haverill is my commander, and he is beloved by every officer in the regiment.

THORN. On what authority, may I ask, do you—

KER. The honor of Colonel Haverill's wife is under our protection.

THORN. Under your protection? You have a better claim than that, perhaps, to act as her champion. Lieutenant Kerchival West is Mrs. Haverill's favorite officer in the regiment.

KER. (*Approaching him.*) You dare to suggest that I—

THORN. If I accept your challenge, I shall do so not because you are her protector but my rival.

. Bah! (*Striking him sharply on the eek with his glove. The two men stand cing each other a moment.*) Is it my uarrel now?

ORN. I think you are entitled to my at- ntion, sir.

R. My time here is limited.

ORN. We need not delay. The Bayou a Forge is convenient to this place.

R. I'll meet you there, with a friend, at nce.

ORN. It will be light enough to see the ights of our weapons in about one hour.

(*They bow to each other, and* THORNTON *goes out.*)

R. I've got ahead of Bob.

RT. (*Without.*) Whoa! Jack! Old oy! Steady, now—that's a good fel- ow.

R. She has returned. I *must* know whether Gertrude Ellingham loves me—efore Thornton and I meet. He is a ood shot.

RT. (*Without, calling.*) O—h! Pete! You may take Jack to the stable. Ha—a—ha! (*She appears at window; to* KERCHIVAL.) Old Pete, on the bay horse, has been doing his best to keep up with us; but Jack and I have led him such a race! Ha—ha—ha—ha! (*Disappearing beyond the window.*)

R. Does she love me?

RT. (*Entering at the rear and coming down.*) I have the very latest news from the headquarters of the Confederate Army in South Carolina. At twenty minutes after three this morning General Beauregard sent this message to Major Anderson in Fort Sumter: "I shall open fire in one hour!" The time is up!—and he will keep his word! (*Turning and looking out of the window.* KERCHIVAL *moves across to her.*)

ER. Gertrude! I must speak to you; we may never meet again; but I must know the truth. I love you. (*Seizing her hand.*) Do you love me? (*She looks around at him as if about to speak; hesitates.*) Answer me! (*She looks down with a coquettish smile, tapping her skirt with her riding whip.*) Well? (*A distant report of a cannon, and low rumbling reverberations over the harbor.* GERTRUDE *turns suddenly, looking out.* KERCHIVAL *draws up, also looking off.*)

ERT. A low—bright—line of fire—in the sky! It is a shell. (*A second's pause; she starts slightly*). It has burst upon the fort. (*Looks over her shoulder at* KERCHIVAL, *drawing up to her full height.*) Now!—do you believe that we Southerners are in deadly earnest?

KER. We Northerners are in deadly earnest, too. I have received my answer. (*He crosses quickly and then turns.*) We are—enemies! (*They look at each other for a moment.*)

(*Exit* KERCHIVAL.)

GERT. Kerchival! (*Moving quickly half across stage, looking after him eagerly, then stops.*) Enemies! (*She drops into the chair sobbing bitterly. Another distant report, and low, long reverberations as the curtain descends.*)

ACT SECOND.

The scene is the exterior of the Ellingham Homestead in the Shenandoah Valley. Three Top Mountain is seen in the distance. A corner of the house, with the projecting end of the veranda is seen on the left. A low wall extends from the veranda across the stage to the center, then with a turn to the right it is continued off the stage. There is a wide opening in the wall at the center, with a low. heavy stone post, with flat top, on each side. Beyond the wall and the opening, a road runs across the stage. At the back of this road there is an elevation of rock and turf. This slopes up to the rear, is level on the top about twelve feet, then slopes down to the road, and also out behind the wood, which is seen at the right. The level part in the centre rises to about four feet above the stage. Beyond this elevation in the distance is a broad valley, with Three Top Mountain rising on the right. The foliage is appropriate to Northern Virginia. Rustic seats and table are on the right. There is a low rock near the stone post. When curtain rises it is sunset. As the act proceeds this fades into twilight and then brightens into moonlight. At the rise of the curtain a trumpet signal is heard, very distant. GERTRUDE *and* MADELINE *are standing on the elevation.* GERTRUDE *is shading her eyes with her hand and looking off to the left.* MADELINE *stands a little below her, on the incline, resting her arm about* GERTRUDE'S *waist, also looking off.*

GERT. It is a regiment of Union Cavalry. The Federal troops now have their lines

three miles beyond us, and only a month ago the Confederate Army was north of Winchester. One army or the other has been marching up and down the Shenandoah Valley for three years. I wonder what the next change will be. We in Virginia have had more than our share of the war. (*Looking off.*)

MAD. You have, indeed, Gertrude. (*Walking down to a seat.*) And we at home in Washington have pitied you so much. But everybody says that there will be peace in the valley after this. (*Dropping into the seat.*)

GERT. Peace! (*Coming down.*) That word means something very different to us poor Southerners from what it means to you.

MAD. I know, dear; and we in the North know how you have suffered, too. We were very glad when General Buckthorn was appointed to the command of the Nineteenth Army Corps, so that Jenny could get permission for herself and me to come and visit you.

GERT. The old General will do anything for Jenny, I suppose.

MAD. Yes. (*Laughing.*) We say in Washington that Jenny is in command of the Nineteenth Army Corps herself.

GERT. I was never more astonished or delighted in my life than when you and Jenny Buckthorn rode up, this morning, with a guard from Winchester; and Madeline, dear, I—I only wish that my brother Robert could be here, too. Do you remember in Charleston, darling—that morning—when I told you that—that Robert loved you?

MAD. He—(*looking down*)—he told me so himself only a little while afterwards, and while we were standing there, on the shore of the bay—the—the shot was fired which compelled him to enter this awful war—and me to return to my home in the North.

GERT. I was watching for that shot, too. (*Turning.*)

MAD. Yes—(*rising*)—you and brother Kerchival—

GERT. We won't talk about that, my dear. We were speaking of Robert. As I told you this morning, I have not heard from him since the battle of Winchester, a month ago. Oh, Madeline! the many, many long weeks, like these, we have suffered, after some terrible battle in which he has been engaged. I do not know, now, whether he is living or dead.

MAD. The whole war has been one long suspense to me. (*Dropping her face into her hands.*)

GERT. My dear sister! (*Placing her arm about her waist and moving to the left.*) You are a Northern girl, and I am a Rebel—but we are sisters. (*They mount the veranda and pass out. An old countryman comes in. He stops and glances back, raises a broken portion of the capstone of the post, and places a letter under it.* GERTRUDE *has stepped back on the veranda and is watching him. He raises his head sharply, looking at her and bringing his finger to his lips. He drops his head again, as with age, and goes out.* GERTRUDE *moves down to the stage and up to the road, looks to the right and left, raises the broken stone, glancing back as she does so, then takes the letter and moves down.*) Robert is alive! It is his handwriting! (*She tears open the wrapper.*) Only a line from him! and this—a dispatch—and also a letter to me! Why, it is from Mrs. Haverill—from Washington—with a United States postmark. (*She reads from a scrap of paper.*) "The enclosed dispatch must be in the hands of Captain Edward Thornton before eight o'clock tonight. We have signaled to him from Three Top Mountain, and he is waiting for it at the bend in Oak Run. Our trusty scout at the Old Forge will carry it if you will put it in his hands." The scout is not there, now; I will carry it to Captain Thornton myself. I—I haven't my own dear horse to depend on now; Jack knew every foot of the way through the woods about here; he could have carried a dispatch himself. I can't bear to think of Jack; it's two years since he was captured by the enemy—and if he is still living—I—I suppose he is carrying one of their officers No! Jack would n't fight on that side. He was a Rebel—as I am. He was one of the Black Horse Cavalry—his eyes always flashed towards the North. Poor Jack! my pet. (*Brushing her eyes.*) But this is no time for tears. I must do the best I can with the gray horse. Captain Thornton shall have the dispatch. (*She reads from note.*) "I also inclose a letter for you. I found it in a United States mail-bag which we captured from the enemy." Oh—that's the way Mrs. Haverill's letter came—Ha—ha—ha—by way of the Rebel army! (*Opens it;*

reads.) "My Darling Gertrude: When Colonel Kerchival West was in Washington last week, on his way from Chattanooga, to serve under Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, he called upon me. It was the first time I had seen him since the opening of the war. I am certain that he still loves you, dear." (*She kisses the letter eagerly, then draws up.*) It is quite immaterial to me whether Kerchival West still loves me or not. (*Reads.*) "I have kept your secret, my darling."—Ah! My secret!—"but I was sorely tempted to betray the confidence you reposed in me at Charleston. If Kerchival West had heard you say, as I did, when your face was hidden in my bosom, that night, that you loved him with your whole heart—"—Oh! I could bite my tongue out now for making that confession— (*She looks down at letter with a smile.*) "I am certain that he still loves you." (*A Trumpet Signal. She kisses the letter repeatedly. The Signal is repeated louder than at first. She starts, listening.*)

(JENNY BUCKTHORN *runs in, on the veranda.*)

JEN. Do you hear, Gertrude, they are going to pass this very house. (*A Military band is playing "John Brown" in the distance. A chorus of soldiers is heard.*) I've been watching them through my glass; it is Colonel Kerchival West's regiment.

GERT. (*Eagerly, then coldly.*) Colonel West's! It is perfectly indifferent to me whose regiment it is.

JEN. Oh! Of course. (*Coming down.*) It is equally indifferent to me; Captain Heartsease is in command of the first troop. (*Trumpet Signal sounds.*) Column right! (*She runs up to the road. Looking off to the left.*) They are coming up the hill.

GERT. At my very door! And Kerchival West in command! I will not stand here and see them pass. The dispatch for Captain Thornton! I will carry it to him as soon as they are gone. (*Exit up the veranda, the band and chorus increasing in volume.*)

JEN. Cavalry! That's the branch of the service I was born in; I was in a fort at the time—on the Plains. Sergeant Barket always said that my first baby squall was a command to the garrison; if any officer or soldier, from my father down, failed to obey my orders, I court-martialed him on the spot. I'll make 'em pass in review. (*Jumping up on the rustic seat.*) Yes! (*Looking off to the left.*) There's Captain Heartsease himself, at the head of the first troop. Draw sabre! (*With parasol.*) Present! (*Imitating the action. The band and chorus are now full and loud; she swings the parasol in time. A trumpet Signal. Band and chorus suddenly cease.*) Halt! Why, they are stopping here. (*Trumpet Signal sounds.*) Dismount! I—I wonder if they are going to—I do believe— (*Looking eagerly. Trumpet Signal.*) Assembly of Guard Details! As sure as fate, they are going into camp here. We girls will have a jolly time. (*Jumping down.*) Ha—ha—ha—ha! Let me see. How shall I receive Captain Heartsease? He deserves a court-martial, for he stole my lace handkerchief—at Mrs. Grayson's reception—in Washington. He was called away by orders to the West that very night, and we haven't met since. (*Sighs.*) He's been in lots of battles since then; I suppose he's forgotten all about the handkerchief. We girls, at home, don't forget such things. We aren't in battles. All we do is to—to scrape lint and flirt with other officers.

(*Enter* CAPTAIN HEARTSEASE, *followed by* COLONEL ROBERT ELLINGHAM, *then stops at the gate.*)

HEART. This way, Colonel Ellingham. (*They enter. As they come down* HEARTSEASE *stops suddenly, looking at* JENNY, *and puts up his glasses.*) Miss Buckthorn!

JEN. Captain Heartsease!

HEART. (*Very quietly and with perfect composure.*) I am thunderstruck. The unexpected sight of you has thrown me into a fever of excitement.

JEN. Has it? (*Aside.*) If he gets so excited as that in battle it must be awful. (*Aloud.*) Colonel Ellingham!

ELLING. Miss Buckthorn! You are visiting my sister? I am what may be called a visitor—by force—myself.

JEN. Oh! You're a prisoner!

ELLING. I ventured too far within the Union lines to-night, and they have picked me up. But Major Wilson has kindly accepted my parole, and I shall make the best of it.

JEN. Is Major Wilson in command of the regiment?

HEART. Yes. Colonel West is to join us at this point, during the evening.

ELLING. I am very glad you are here, Miss Buckthorn, with Gertrude.

JEN. Somebody here will be delighted to see you, Colonel.

ELLING. My sister can hardly be pleased to see me as a prisoner.

JEN. Not your sister. (*Passing him and crossing to the veranda. She turns and beckons to him. She motions with her thumb, over her shoulder. He goes up the steps of the veranda and turns.*)

ELLING. What do you mean?

JEN. I mean this—(*Reaching up her face, he leans down, placing his ear near her lips*)—somebody else's sister! When she first sees you, be near enough to catch her.

ELLING. I understand you! Madeline! (*Exit on veranda.* JENNY *runs up steps after him, then stops and looks back at* HEARTSEASE *over the railing.* HEARTSEASE *takes a lace handkerchief from his pocket.*)

JEN. I do believe that 's my handkerchief.

(*A guard of Sentries marches in and across the stage in the road. The Corporal in command orders halt and a sentry to post, then marches the guard out. The sentry stands with his back to the audience, afterwards moving out and in, appearing and disappearing during the Act.*)

HEART. Miss Buckthorn! I owe you an apology. After I left your side, the last time we met, I found your handkerchief in my possession. I assure you, it was an accident.

JEN. (*Aside, pouting.*) I thought he *intended* to steal it. (*Aloud.*) That was more than a year ago. (*Then brightly.*) Do you always carry it with you?

HEART. Always; there. (*Indicating his left breast pocket.*)

JEN. Next to his heart!

HEART. Shall I return it to you?

JEN. Oh, if a lace handkerchief can be of any use to you, Captain, during the hardships of a campaign—you—you may keep that one. You soldiers have so few comforts—and it 's real lace.

HEART. Thank you. (*Returning the handkerchief to his pocket.*) Miss Buckthorn, your father is in command of the Nineteenth Army Corps. He does n't like me.

JEN. I know it.

HEART. But you are in command of him.

JEN. Yes; I always have been.

HEART. If ever you decide to assume command of any other man, I—I trust you will give *me* your orders.

JEN. (*Aside, starting back.*) If that was intended for a proposal, it 's the queerest-shaped one I ever heard of. (*Aloud.*) Do you mean, Captain, that—that you—I must command myself now. (*Shouldering her parasol.*) 'Bout—face! March! (*Turning squarely around, marching up and out, on the veranda.*)

HEART. I have been placed on waiting orders. (*Stepping up the stage and looking after her; then very quietly and without emotion.*) I am in an agony of suspense. The sight of that girl always arouses the strongest emotions of my nature.

(*Enter* COLONEL KERCHIVAL WEST, *looking at the paper in his hand. The sentinel, in the road, comes to a salute.*)

Colonel West!

KER. Captain!

HEART. You have rejoined the regiment sooner than we expected.

KER. (*Looking at the paper.*) Yes; General Haverill is to meet me here at seven o'clock. Major Wilson tells me that some of your company captured Colonel Robert Ellingham, of the Tenth Virginia.

HEART. He is here under parole.

KER. And this is the old Ellingham homestead. (*Aside.*) Gertrude herself is here, I suppose; almost a prisoner to me, like her brother; and my troops surround their home. She must, indeed, feel that I am her enemy now. Ah, well, war is war. (*Aloud.*) By the bye, Heartsease, a young Lieutenant, Frank Bedloe, has joined our troop?

HEART. Yes; an excellent young officer.

KER. I sent for him as I came through the camp. Lieutenant Frank "Bedloe" is the son of General Haverill.

HEART. Indeed! Under an assumed name!

KER. He was supposed to have been killed in New Orleans more than a year ago; but he was taken prisoner instead.

HEART. He is here.

KER. I should never have known him; with his full beard and bronzed face. His face was as smooth as a boy's when I last met him in Charleston.

(*Enter* LIEUTENANT FRANK BEDLOE; *he stops, saluting.*)

FRANK. You wished me to report to you, Colonel?

KER. You have been assigned to the regiment during my absence.

FRANK. Yes, sir.

(KERCHIVAL *moves to him and grasps his hand; looks into his eyes a moment before speaking.*)

KER. Frank Haverill.

FRANK. You—you know me, sir?

KER. I saw Mrs. Haverill while I was passing through Washington on Saturday. She told me that you had escaped from prison in Richmond, and had reentered the service. She did not know then that you had been assigned to my regiment. I received a letter from her, in Winchester, this morning, informing me of the fact, and asking for my good offices in your behalf. But here is the letter. (*Taking a letter from wallet and giving it to him.*) It is for you rather than for me. I shall do everything I can for you, my dear fellow.

FRANK. Thank you, sir. (*He opens the letter, dropping the envelope upon the table.*) Kind, thoughtful and gentle to my faults, as ever—(*Looking at the letter*)—and always thinking of my welfare. My poor little wife, too, is under her protection. Gentlemen, I beg of you not to reveal my secret to my father.

KER. General Haverill shall know nothing from us, my boy, you have my word for that.

HEART. Nothing.

KER. And he cannot possibly recognize you. What with your full beard, and thinking as he does, that you are—

FRANK. That I am dead. I am dead to him. It would have been better if I had died. Nothing but my death—not even that—can wipe out the disgrace which I brought upon his name.

HEART. General Haverill has arrived.

(*Enter* GENERAL HAVERILL, *with a Staff Officer.*)

FRANK. (*Moving down.*) My father!

HAVER. (*After exchanging salutes with the three officers, he turns to the Staff Officer, giving him a paper and brief instructions in dumb show. The Officer goes out over the incline. Another Staff Officer enters, salutes and hands him a paper, then stands up.*) Ah! The men are ready. (*Looking at the paper, then to* KERCHIVAL.) Colonel! I have a very important matter to arrange with you; there is not a moment to be lost. I will ask Captain Heartsease to remain. (FRANK *salutes and starts up the stage;* HAVERILL *looks at him, starting slightly; raises his hand to detain him.*) One moment; your name!

HEART. Lieutenant Bedloe, General, of my own troop, and one of our best officers.

(HAVERILL *steps to* FRANK, *looking into his face a moment.*)

HAVER. Pardon me! (*He steps down the stage.* FRANK *moves away from him, then stops and looks back at him.* HAVERILL *stands up a moment in thought, covers his face with one hand, then draws up.*) Colonel West! We have a most dangerous piece of work for a young officer—(FRANK *starts joyfully*)—to lead a party of men, whom I have already selected. I cannot *order* an officer to undertake anything so nearly hopeless; he must be a volunteer.

FRANK. Oh, sir, General! Let me be their leader.

HAVER. I thought you had passed on.

FRANK. Do not refuse me, sir. (HAVERILL *looks at him a moment.* HEARTSEASE *and* KERCHIVAL *exchange glances.*)

HAVER. You are the man we need, my young friend. You shall go. Listen! We wish to secure a key to the cipher dispatches, which the enemy are now sending from their signal station on Three Top Mountain. There is another Confederate Signal Station in the valley, just beyond Buckton's Ford. (*Pointing to the left.*) Your duty will be this: First, to get inside the enemy's line; then to follow a path through the woods, with one of our scouts as your guide; attack the Station suddenly, and secure their code, if possible. I have this moment received word that the scout and the men are at the fort, now, awaiting their leader. Major McCandless, of my staff, will take you to the place. (*Indicating the Staff Officer.* FRANK *exchanges salutes with him.*) My young friend! I do not conceal from you the dangerous nature of the work on which I am sending you. If—if you do not return, I—I will write, myself, to your friends. (*Taking out a note book.*) Have you a father living?

FRANK. My—father—is—is—he is—

HAVER. I understand you. A mother? Or—

KER. I have the address of Lieutenant Bedloe's friends, General.

HAVER. I will ask you to give it to me, if

necessary. (*He extends his hand.*) Good-bye, my lad. (FRANK *moves to him.* HAVERILL *grasps his hand, warmly.*) Keep a brave heart and come back to us.

(FRANK *moves up the stage. Exit Staff Officer.*)

FRANK. He is my father still. (*Exit.*)

HAVER. My dead boy's face! (*Dropping his face into both hands.*)

HEART. (*Apart to* KERCHIVAL.) He shall not go alone. (*Aloud.*) General! Will you kindly give me leave of absence from the command?

HAVER. Leave of absence! To an officer in active service—and in the presence of the enemy?

KER. (*Taking his hand. Apart.*) God bless you, old fellow! Look after the boy.

HAV. A—h— (*With a sudden thought, turns.*) I think I understand you, Captain Heartsease. Yes; you may have leave of absence.

HEART. Thank you. (*He salutes.* HAVERILL *and* KERCHIVAL *salute. Exit* HEARTSEASE.)

KER. Have you any further orders for me, General?

HAVER. I wish you to understand the great importance of the duty to which I have just assigned this young officer. General Sheridan started for Washington this noon, by way of Front Royal. Since his departure, we have had reason to believe that the enemy are about to move, and we must be able to read their signal dispatches, if possible. (*Sitting down.*) I have ordered Captain Lockwood, of our own Signal Corps to report to you here, with officers and men. (*He takes up the empty envelope on table, unconsciously, as he speaks, tapping it on the table.*) If Lieutenant Bedloe succeeds in getting the key to the enemy's cipher, we can signal from this point—(*pointing to the elevation*)—to our station at Front Royal. Men and horses are waiting there now, to carry forward a message, if necessary, to General Sheridan himself. (*He starts suddenly, looking at the envelope in his hand; reads address. Aside.*) "Colonel Kerchival West"—in my wife's handwriting!

KER. I'll attend to your orders.

HAVER. Postmarked at Washington, yesterday. (*Reads.*) "Private and confidential." (*Aloud.*) Colonel West! I found a paragraph, to-day, in a paper published in Richmond, taken from a prisoner. I will read it to you. (*He takes a newspaper slip from his wallet and reads.*) "From the *Charleston Mercury.* Captain Edward Thornton, of the Confederate Secret Service, has been assigned to duty in the Shenandoah Valley. Our gallant Captain still bears upon his face the mark of his meeting, in 1861, with Lieutenant, now Colonel Kerchival West, who is also to serve in the valley, with Sheridan's Army. Another meeting between these two men would be one of the strange coincidences of the war, as they were at one time, if not indeed at present, interested in the same beautiful woman." (*Rises.*) I will ask you to read the last few lines, yourself. (*Crossing, he hands* KERCHIVAL *the slip.*)

KER. (*Reading.*) "The scandal connected with the lovely wife of a Northern officer, at the opening of the war, was overshadowed, of course, by the attack on Fort Sumter; but many Charlestonians will remember it. The lady in defense of whose good name Captain Thornton fought the duel"—he defended her good name!—"is the wife of General Haverill, who will be Colonel West's immediate commander." (*He pauses a moment, then hands back the slip.*) General! I struck Mr. Thornton, after a personal quarrel.

HAVER. And the cause of the blow? There is much more in this than I have ever known of. I need hardly say that I do not accept the statement of this scandalous paragraph as correct. I will ask you to tell me the whole story, frankly, as man to man.

KER. (*After a moment's thought.*) I will tell you—all—frankly, General.

(*Enters* SERGEANT BARKET.)

BARKET. Colonel Wist? Adjutant Rollins wishes to report—a prisoner—just captured.

HAVER. We will meet again later, to-night when the camp is at rest. We are both soldiers, and have duties before us, at once. For the present, Colonel, be on the alert; we must watch the enemy. (*He moves up the stage.* BARKET *salutes.* HAVERILL *stops and looks at envelope in his hands, reading.*) "Private and confidential." (*Exit.*)

KER. Sergeant Barket! Lieutenant Bedloe has crossed the enemy's line, at Buck-

ton's Ford, with a party of men. I wish you to ride to the ford yourself, and remain there, with your horse in readiness and fresh. As soon as any survivor of the party returns, ride back with the first news at full speed.

BARKET. Yes, sir. (*Starting.*)

KER. You say a prisoner has been captured? Is it a spy?

BARKET. Worse—a petticoat.

KER. A female prisoner! (*Dropping into the seat.*)

BARKET. I towld the byes your honor would n't thank us fer the catchin' of her. The worst of it is she 's a lady; and what 's worse still, it 's a purty one.

KER. Tell Major Wilson, for me, to let her take the oath, and everything else she wants. The Government of the United States will send her an apology and a new bonnet.

BARKET. The young lady is to take the oath, is it? She says she 'll see us damned first.

KER. A lady, Barket?

BARKET. Well! she did n't use thim exact words. That 's the way I understand her emphasis. Ivery time she looks at me, I feel like getting under a boom-proof. She was dashing through the woods on a gray horse, sur; and we had the divil's own chase. But we came up wid her, at last, down by the bend in Oak Run. Just at that moment we saw the figure of a Confederate officer, disappearing among the trays on the ither side.

KER. A—h!

BARKET. Two of us rayturned wid the girl; and the rist wint after the officer. Nothing has been heard of thim yet.

KER. Have you found any dispatches on the prisoner?

BARKET. Well!—yer honor, I 'm a bachelor, meself; and I 'm not familiar with the taypography of the sex. We byes are in mortal terror for fear somebody might order us to go on an exploring expedition.

KER. Tell them to send the prisoner here, Barket, and hurry to Buckton's Ford yourself, at once.

BARKET. As fast as me horse can carry me, sir, and it 's a good one. (*Exit.*)

KER. I 'd rather deal with half the Confederate army than with one woman, but I must question her. They captured her down by the Bend in Oak Run. (*Taking out the map, and looking at it.*) I see. She had just met, or was about to meet, a Confederate officer at that point. It is evident that she was either taking him a dispatch or was there to receive one. Oak Run. (CORPORAL DUNN *and two soldiers enter, with* GERTRUDE *as a prisoner. They stop,* KERCHIVAL *sits, studying the map.* GERTRUDE *glances at him and marches down with her head erect; she stops, with her back to him.*)

CORP. DUNN. The prisoner, Colonel West!

KER. Ah! Very well, Corporal; you can go. (*Rising; he motions the guard to retire.* CORP. DUNN *gives the necessary orders and exit with guard.*) Be seated, madam. (GERTRUDE *draws up, folding her arms and planting her foot, spitefully.* KERCHIVAL *shrugs his shoulders. Aside.*) I wish they 'd capture a tigress for me, or some other female animal that I know how to manage better than I do a woman. (*Aloud.*) I am very sorry, madam; but, of course, my duty as a military officer is paramount to all other considerations. You have been captured within the lines of this army, and under circumstances which lead me to think that you have important dispatches upon your person. I trust that you will give me whatever you have, at once. I shall be exceedingly sorry if you compel me to adopt the extreme—and the very disagreeable course—for both of us—of having—you—I—I hesitate even to use the word, madame—but military law is absolute—having you—

GERT. Searched! If you dare, Colonel West! (*Turning to him suddenly and drawing up to her full height.*)

KER. Gertrude Ellingham! (*Springs across to her, with his arms extended.*) My dear Gertrude!

GERT. (*Turning her back upon him.*) Not "dear Gertrude" to you, sir!

KER. Not?—Oh! I forgot.

GERT. (*Coldly.*) I am your prisoner.

KER. Yes. (*Drawing up firmly, with a change of manner.*) We will return to the painful realities of war. I am very sorry that you have placed yourself in a position like this, and, believe me, Gertrude—(*With growing tenderness.*)—I am still more sorry to be in such a position myself. (*Resting one hand on her arm, and his other arm about her waist.*)

GERT. (*After looking down at his hands.*) You don't like the position? (*He starts back, drawing up with dignity.*) Is that the paramount duty of a military officer?

KER. You will please hand me whatever

dispatches or other papers may be in your possession.

GERT. (*Looking away.*) You will *force* me, I suppose. I am a woman; you have the power. Order in the guard! A Corporal and two men—you 'd better make it a dozen—I am dangerous! Call the whole regiment to arms! Beat the long roll! I won't give up, if all the armies of the United States surround me.

(*Enter* GENERAL BUCKTHORN.)

KER. General Buckthorn! (*Saluting.*)

BUCK. Colonel West.

GERT. (*Aside.*) Jenny's father! (BUCKTHORN *glances at* GERTRUDE, *who still stands looking away. He moves down to* KERCHIVAL.)

BUCK. (*Apart, gruffly.*) I was passing with my staff, and I was informed that you had captured a woman bearing dispatches to the enemy. Is this the one?

KER. Yes, General.

BUCK. Ah! (*Turning, he looks at her.*)

GERT. I wonder if he will recognize me. He has n't seen me since I was a little girl. (*She turns toward him.*)

BUCK. (*Turning to* KERCHIVAL *and punching him in the ribs.*) Fine young woman!—(*He turns and bows to her very gallantly, removing his hat. She bows deeply in return*) A-h-e-m! (*Suddenly pulling himself up to a stern, military air; then gruffly to* KERCHIVAL, *extending his hand.*) Let me see the dispatches.

KER. She declines positively to give them up.

BUCK. Oh! Does she? (*Walks up the stage thoughtfully, and turns.*) My dear young lady! I trust you will give us no further trouble. Kindly let us have those dispatches.

GERT. (*Looking away.*) I have no dispatches, and I would not give them to you if I had.

BUCK. What! You defy my authority? Colonel West, I command you! Search the prisoner!

(GERTRUDE *turns suddenly towards* KERCHIVAL, *facing him defiantly. He looks across at her, aghast. A moment's pause.*)

KER. General Buckthorn—I decline to obey that order.

BUCK. You—you decline to obey my order! (*Moves down to him fiercely.*)

KER. (*Apart.*) General! It is the woman I love.

BUCK. (*Apart.*) Is it? Damn you, sir! I would n't have an officer in my army corps who *would* obey me, under such circumstances. I 'll have to look for those dispatches myself.

KER. (*Facing him, angrily.*) If you dare, General Buckthorn!

BUCK. (*Apart.*) Blast your eyes! I 'd kick you out of the army if you 'd *let* me search her; but it 's my military duty to swear at you. (*To* GERTRUDE.) Colonel West has sacrificed his life to protect you.

GERT. His life!

BUCK. I shall have him shot for insubordination to his commander, immediately. (*Gives* KERCHIVAL *a huge wink, and turns up stage.*)

GERT. Oh, sir! General! I have told you the truth. I have no dispatches. Believe me, sir, I have n't so much as a piece of paper about me, except—

BUCK. Except? (*Turning sharply.*)

GERT. Only a letter. Here it is. (*Taking letter from the bosom of her dress.*) Upon my soul, it is all I have. Truly, it is.

BUCK. (*Taking the letter.*) Colonel West, you 're reprieved. (*Winks at* KERCHIVAL, *who turns away, laughing.* BUCKTHORN *reads letter.*) "Washington"—Ho—ho! From within our own lines—"Colonel Kerchival West"—

KER. Eh?

GERT. Please, General!—Don't read it aloud.

BUCK. Very well! I won't.

KER. (*Aside.*) I wonder what it has to do with me.

BUCK. (*Reading. Aside.*) "If Kerchival West had heard you say, as I did—m—m—that you loved him with your whole heart—" (*He glances up at* GERTRUDE, *who drops her head, coyly.*) This is a very important military document. (*Turns to the last page.*) "Signed, Constance Haverill." (*Turns to front page.*) "My dear Gertrude!" Is this Miss Gertrude Ellingham?

GERT. Yes, General.

BUCK. I sent my daughter, Jenny, to your house, with an escort, this morning.

GERT. She is here.

BUCK. (*Tapping her under the chin.*) You 're an arrant little Rebel, my dear; but I like you immensely. (*Draws up suddenly, with an Ahem!, then turns to* KERCHIVAL.) Colonel West, I leave this dangerous young woman in your charge. (KERCHIVAL *approaches.*) If she disobeys you in any way, or attempts to

escape—read that letter! (*Giving him the letter.*)

GERT. Oh! General!

BUCK. But not till then.

KER. (*Tenderly, taking her hand.*) My—prisoner!

GERT. (*Aside.*) I could scratch my own eyes out—or his, either—rather than have him read that letter.

(*Enter* CORPORAL DUNN, *with a guard of four soldiers and* CAPTAIN EDWARD THORNTON *as a prisoner.*)

KER. Edward Thornton!

GERT. They have taken him, also! He has the dispatch!

DUNN. The Confederate Officer, Colonel, who was pursued by our troops at Oak Run, after they captured the young lady.

BUCK. The little witch has been communicating with the enemy!

KER. (*To* GERTRUDE.) You will give me your parole of honor until we next meet?

GERT. Yes. (*Aside.*) That letter! I *am* his prisoner. (*She walks up the steps, looking back at Captain Thornton, and then leaves the stage.*)

KER. We will probably find the dispatches we have been looking for now, General.

BUCK. Prisoner! You will hand us what papers you may have.

THORN. I will hand you nothing.

BUCK. Colonel!

(KERCHIVAL *motions to* THORNTON, *who looks at him sullenly.*)

KER. Corporal Dunn!—search the prisoner. (DUNN *steps to* THORNTON, *taking him by the shoulder and turning him rather roughly so that* THORNTON'S *back is to the audience.* DUNN *throws open his coat, takes the paper from his breast, hands it to* KERCHIVAL, *who gives it to* BUCKTHORN.) Proceed with the search.

(DUNN *continues the search.* BUCKTHORN *drops upon the seat, lights a match and looks at the paper.*)

BUCK. (*Reading.*) "General Rosser will rejoin General Early with all the cavalry in his command, at—" This is important.

(*Continues to read with matches. The* CORPORAL *hands a packet to* KERCHIVAL. *He removes the covering.*)

KER. (*Starting.*) A portrait of Mrs. Haverill! (*He touches* CORPORAL DUNN *on the shoulder quickly and motions him to retire.* DUNN *falls back to the guard.* KERCHIVAL *speaks apart to* THORNTON. *who has turned front.*) How did this portrait come into your possession?

THORN. That is my affair, not yours!

BUCK. Anything else, Colonel?

KER. (*Placing the miniature in his pocket.*) Nothing!

THORN. (*Apart, over* KERCHIVAL'S *shoulder.*) A time will come, perhaps, when I can avenge the insult of this search, and also this scar. (*Pointing to a scar on his face.*) Your aim was better than mine in Charleston, but we shall meet again; give me back that picture.

KER. Corporal! Take your prisoner!

THORN. Ah!

(*He springs viciously at* KERCHIVAL; CORPORAL DUNN *springs forward, seizes* THORNTON *and throws him back to the Guard.* KERCHIVAL *walks to the right,* DUNN *stands with his carbine levelled at* THORNTON, *looks at* KERCHIVAL, *who quietly motions him out.* CORPORAL DUNN *gives the orders to the men and marches out, with* THORNTON.)

BUCK. Ah! (*Still reading with matches.*) Colonel! (*Rising.*) The enemy has a new movement on foot, and General Sheridan has left the army! Listen! (*Reads from dispatches with matches.*) "Watch for a signal from Three Top Mountain to-night."

KER. We hope to be able to read that signal ourselves.

BUCK. Yes, I know. Be on your guard. I will speak with General Haverill, and then ride over to General Wright's headquarters. Keep us informed.

KER. I will, General.

(*Saluting.* BUCKTHORN *salutes and exit.*)

KER. "Watch for a signal from Three Top Mountain to-night." (*Looking up at Mountain.*) We shall be helpless to read it unless Lieutenant Bedloe is successful. I only hope the poor boy is not lying dead, already, in those dark woods beyond the ford. (*He turns down, taking the miniature from his pocket.*) How came Edward Thornton to have this portrait of Mrs. Haverill in his possession?

(GERTRUDE *runs in on the veranda.*)

GERT. Oh, Colonel West! He's here! (*Looks back.*) They are coming this way with him.

KER. Him! Who?

GERT. Jack.

KER. Jack!

GERT. My own horse!

KER. Ah, I remember! He and I were acquainted in Charleston.

GERT. Two troopers are passing through the camp with him.

KER. He is not in your possession?

GERT. He was captured at the battle of Fair Oaks, but I recognized him the moment I saw him; and I am sure he knew me, too, when I went up to him. He whinnied and looked so happy. You are in command here— (*Running down.*) —you will compel them to give him up to me?

KER. If he is in my command, your pet shall be returned to you. I'll give one of my own horses to the Government as a substitute, if necessary.

GERT. Oh, thank you, my dear Kerchival! (*Going to him; he takes her hand, looking into her eyes.*) I—I could almost—

KER. Can you almost confess, at last, Gertrude, that you—love me? (*Tenderly; she draws back, hanging her head, but leaving her hand in his.*) Have I been wrong? I felt that that confession was hovering on your tongue when we were separated in Charleston. Have I seen that confession in your eyes since we met again to-day—even among the angry flashes which they have shot out at me? During all this terrible war—in the camp and the trench—in the battle—I have dreamed of a meeting like this. You are still silent?

(*Her hand is still in his. She is looking down. A smile steals over her face, and she raises her eyes to his, taking his hand in both her own.*)

GERT. Kerchival! I— (*Enter* BENSON. *She looks around over her shoulder.* KERCHIVAL *looks up. A trooper leading a large black horse, now caparisoned in military saddle, bridle, follows* BENSON *across; another trooper follows.*) *Jack!*

(*She runs up the stage, meeting the horse.* KERCHIVAL *turns.*)

KER. Confound Jack! That infernal horse was always in my way!

GERT. (*With her arm about her horse's neck.*) My darling old fellow! Is he not beautiful, Kerchival? They have taken good care of him. How soft his coat is!

KER. Benson, explain this!

BENSON. I was instructed to show this horse and his leader through the lines, sir.

KER. What are your orders, my man? (*Moving up, the trooper hands him a paper. He moves down a few steps, reading it.*)

GERT. You are to be mine again, Jack, mine! (*Resting her cheek against the horse's head and patting it.*) The Colonel has promised it to me.

KER. Ah! (*With a start, as he reads the paper.* GERTRUDE *raises her head and looks at him.*) This is General Sheridan's horse, on his way to Winchester, for the use of the General when he returns from Washington.

GERT. General Sheridan's horse? He is mine!

KER. I have no authority to detain him. He must go on.

GERT. I have hold of Jack's bridle, and you may order your men to take out their sabres and cut my hand off.

KER. (*He approaches her and gently takes her hand as it holds the bridle.*) I would rather have my own hand cut off, Gertrude, than bring tears to your eyes, but there is no alternative! (GERTRUDE *releases the bridle and turns front, brushing her eyes, her hand still held in his, his back to the audience. He returns the order and motions troopers out; they move out, with the horse.* KERCHIVAL *turns to move.* GERTRUDE *starts after the horse; he turns quickly to check her.*) You forget—that—you are my prisoner.

GERT. I *will* go!

KER. General Buckthorn left me special instructions—(*taking out the wallet and letter*)—in case you declined to obey my orders—

GERT. Oh, Colonel! Please don't read that letter. (*She stands near him, dropping her head. He glances up at her from the letter. She glances up at him and drops her eyes again.*) I will obey you.

KER. (*Aside.*) What the deuce can there be in that letter?

GERT. Colonel West! Your men made me a prisoner this afternoon; to-night you have robbed me, by your own orders, of —of—Jack is only a pet, but I love him; and my brother is also a captive in your hands. When we separated in Charleston you said that we were enemies. What is there lacking to make those words true to-day? You *are* my enemy! A few moments ago you asked me to make a confession to you. You can judge for yourself whether it is likely to be a confession of—love—or of hatred!

KER. Hatred!

GERT. (*Facing him.*) Listen to my confession, sir! From the bottom of my heart—

KER. Stop!

GERT. I will not stop!

KER. I command you.

GERT. Indeed! (*He throws open the wallet in his hand and raises the letter.*) Ah! (*She turns away; turns again, as if to speak. He half opens the letter. She stamps her foot and walks up steps of the veranda. Here she turns again.*) I tell you, I— (*He opens the letter. She turns, and exits with a spiteful step.*)

KER. I wonder if that document orders me to cut her head off! (*Returning it to wallet and pocket.*) Was ever lover in such a position? I am obliged to cross the woman I love at every step.

(*Enter* CORPORAL DUNN, *very hurriedly.*)

DUNN. A message from Adjutant Rollins, sir! The prisoner, Capt. Thornton, dashed away from the special guard which was placed over him, and he has escaped. He had a knife concealed, and two of the Guard are badly wounded. Adjutant Rollins thinks the prisoner is still within the lines of the camp—in one of the houses or the stables.

KER. Tell Major Wilson to place the remainder of the Guard under arrest, and to take every possible means to recapture the prisoner. (CORP. DUNN *salutes, and exit.*) So! Thornton has jumped his guard, and he is armed. I wonder if he is trying to get away, or to find me. From what I know of the man, he does n't much care which he succeeds in doing. That scar which I gave him in Charleston is deeper in his heart than it is in his face. (*A signal light suddenly appears on Three Top Mountain. The "Call."*) Ah! —the enemy's signal!

(*Enter* CAPTAIN LOCKWOOD, *followed by the* LIEUTENANT OF SIGNAL CORPS.)

Captain Lockwood! You are here! Are your signalmen with you?

LOCK. Yes, Colonel; and one of my Lieutenants.

(*The* LIEUTENANT *is looking up at the signal with his glass.* CAPTAIN LOCKWOOD *does the same.*)

(HAVERILL *enters, followed by two staff officers.*)

HAVER. (*As he enters.*) Can you make anything of it, Captain?

LOCKWOOD. Nothing, General! Our services are quite useless unless Lieutenant Bedloe returns with the key to their signals.

HAVER. A—h! We shall fail. It is time he had returned, if successful.

SENTINEL. (*Without.*) Halt! Who goes there? (KERCHIVAL *runs up the stage and half way up the incline, looking off.*) Halt! (*A shot is heard without.*)

BARKET. (*Without.*) Och!—Ye murtherin spalpeen!

KER. Sentinel! Let him pass; it is Sergeant Barket.

SENTINEL. (*Without.*) Pass on.

KER. He did n't give the countersign. News from Lieutenant Bedloe, General!

BARKET. (*Hurrying in, up the slope.*) Colonel Wist, our brave byes wiped out the enemy, and here 's the papers.

KER. Ah! (*Taking the papers.—Then to* LOCKWOOD.) Is that the key?

LOCK. Yes. Lieutenant!

(LIEUTENANT *hurries up to the elevation, looking through his glass.* LOCKWOOD *opens the book.*)

HAVER. What of Lieutenant Bedloe, Sergeant?

BARKET. Sayreously wounded, and in the hands of the inimy!

HAVER. (*Sighing.*) A—h.

BARKET. (*Coming down the stone steps.*) It is reported that Captain Heartsease was shot dead at his side.

KER. Heartsease dead!

LIEUT. OF SIGNAL CORPS. (*Reading Signals.*) Twelve—Twenty-two—Eleven.

BARKET. Begorra! I forgot the Sintinil entirely, but he did n't forget me. (*Holding his left arm.*)

HAVER. Colonel West! We must make every possible sacrifice for the immediate exchange of Lieutenant Bedloe, if he is still living. It is due to him. Colonel Robert Ellingham is a prisoner in this camp; offer him his own exchange for young Bedloe.

KER. He will accept, of course. I will ride to the front with him myself, General, and show him through the lines.

HAVER. At once! (KERCHIVAL *crosses front and exit on the veranda.*) Can you follow the dispatch, Captain?

LOCK. Perfectly; everything is here.

HAVER. Well!

LIEUT. OF SIGNAL CORPS. Eleven—Twenty-two—One—Twelve.

LOCK. (*From the book.*) "General Longstreet is coming with—"

HAVER. Longstreet!

LIEUT. OF SIGNAL CORPS. One—Twenty-one.

LOCK. "With eighteen thousand men."

HAVER. Longstreet and his corps!

LIEUT. OF SIGNAL CORPS. Two—Eleven—Twenty-two.

LOCK. "Sheridan is away!"

HAVER. They have discovered his absence!

LIEUT. OF SIGNAL CORPS. Two—Twenty-two—Eleven—One—Twelve—One.

LOCK. "We will crush the Union Army before he can return."

HAVER. Signal that dispatch from here to our Station at Front Royal. Tell them to send it after General Sheridan—and ride for their lives. (LOCKWOOD *hurries out.*) Major Burton! We will ride to General Wright's headquarters at once—our horses!

(*The noise of a struggle is heard without.*)

BARKET. What the devil is the row out there?

(*Exit, also one of the Staff Officers.*)

HAVER. (*Looking off to the left.*) What is this! Colonel West wounded!

(*Enter* KERCHIVAL WEST, *his coat thrown open, with* ELLINGHAM, BARKET *assisting.*)

ELLING. Steady, Kerchival, old boy! You should have let us carry you.

KER. Nonsense, old fellow! It's a mere touch with the point of the knife. I—I'm faint—with the loss of a little blood—that's all. Bob!—I—

(*He reels suddenly and is caught by* ELLINGHAM *as he sinks to the ground, insensible.*)

ELLING. Kerchival. (*Kneeling at his side.*)

HAVER. Go for the Surgeon! (*To the Staff Officer, who goes out quickly on veranda.*) How did this happen?

(*Enter* CORPORAL DUNN *and Guard, with* THORNTON. *He is in his shirt sleeves and disheveled, his arms folded. They march down.*)

Captain Thornton!

ELLING. We were leaving the house together; a hunted animal sprang suddenly across our path, like a panther. (*Looking over his shoulder.*) There it stands. Kerchival!—my brother!

CORP. DUNN. We had just brought this prisoner to bay, but I'm afraid we were too late.

HAVER. This is assassination, sir, not war. If you have killed him—

THORN. Do what you like with me; we need waste no words. I had an old account to settle, and I have paid my debt.

ELLING. General Haverill! I took these from his breast when he first fell.

(*Handing up wallet and miniature to* HAVERILL. HAVERILL *starts as he looks at the miniature.* THORNTON *watches him.*)

HAVER. (*Aside.*) My wife's portrait!

THORN. If I have killed him—your honor will be buried in the same grave.

HAVER. Her picture on his breast! She gave it to him—not to my son!

(*Dropping into the seat.* CAPT. LOCKWOOD *enters with a Signalman, who has a burning torch on a long pole; he hurries up the elevation.* CAPT. LOCKWOOD *stands below, facing him. Almost simultaneously with the entrance of the Signalman,* GERTRUDE *runs in on veranda.*)

GERT. They are calling for a surgeon! Who is it? Brother!—you are safe. Ah! (*Uttering a scream, as she sees* KERCHIVAL, *and falling on her knees at his side.*) Kerchival! Forget those last bitter words I said to you. Can't you hear my confession? I do love you. Can't you hear me? I love you!

(*The Signalman is swinging the torch as the curtain descends,* LOCKWOOD *looking out to the right.*)

ACT THIRD.

The scene is the same as in the Second Act. It is now bright daylight, with sunshine flecking the foreground and bathing the distant valley and mountains. As the curtain rises JENNY BUCKTHORN *is sitting on the low stone post, in the center of the stage, looking toward the left. She imitates a Trumpet Signal on her closed fists.*

JENNY. What a magnificent line! Guides-posts! Every man and every horse is eager for the next command. There comes the flag! (*As the scene progresses trumpet signals are heard without and she follows their various meanings in her speech.*) To the standard! The regiment is going to the front. Oh! I do wish I could go with it. I always do, the moment I hear the trumpets. Boots and Saddles! Mount! I wish I was in com-

mand of the regiment. It was born in me. Fours right! There they go! Look at those horses' ears! Forward. (*A military band is heard without, playing "The Battle Cry of Freedom."* JENNY *takes the attitude of holding a bridle and trotting.*) Rappity—plap—plap—plap, etc. (*She imitates the motions of a soldier on horseback, stepping down to the rock at side of post; thence to the ground and about the stage, with the various curvettings of a spirited horse. A chorus of soldiers is heard without, with the band. The music becomes more and more distant.* JENNY *gradually stops as the music is dying away, and stands, listening. As it dies entirely away, she suddenly starts to an enthusiastic attitude.*) Ah! If I were only a man! The enemy! On Third Battalion, left, front, into line, march! Draw sabres! Charge! (*Imitates a trumpet signal. As she finishes, she rises to her full height, with both arms raised, and trembling with enthusiasm.*) Ah! (*She suddenly drops her arms and changes to an attitude and expression of disappointment—pouting.*) And the first time Old Margery took me to Father, in her arms, she had to tell him I was a girl. Father was as much disgusted as I was. But he'd never admit it; he says I'm as good a soldier as any of 'em—just as I am.

(*Enter* BARKET, *on the veranda, his arm in a sling.*)

BARKET. Miss Jenny!

JENNY. Barket! The regiment has marched away to the front, and we girls are left here, with just you and a corporal's guard to look after us.

BARKET. I've been watching the byes mesilf. (*Coming down.*) If a little military sugar-plum like you, Miss Jenny, objects to not goin' wid 'em, what do you think of an ould piece of hard tack like me? I can't join the regiment till I've taken you and Miss Madeline back to Winchester, by your father's orders. But it is n't the first time I've escorted you, Miss Jenny. Many a time, when you was a baby, on the Plains, I commanded a special guard to accompany ye's from one fort to another, and we gave the command in a whisper, so as not to wake ye's up.

JENNY. I told you to tell Father that I'd let him know when Madeline and I were ready to go.

BARKET. I tould him that I'd as soon move a train of army mules.

JENNY. I suppose we must start for home again to-day?

BARKET. Yes, Miss Jenny, in charge of an ould Sargeant wid his arm in a sling and a couple of convalescent throopers. This department of the United States Army will move to the rear in half an hour.

JENNY. Madeline and I only came yesterday morning.

BARKET. Whin your father got ye's a pass to the front, we all thought the fightin' in the Shenandoey Valley was over. It looks now as if it was just beginning. This is no place for women, now. Miss Gertrude Ellingham ought to go wid us, but she won't.

JENNY. Barket! Captain Heartsease left the regiment yesterday, and he has n't rejoined it; he is n't with them, now, at the head of his company. Where is he?

BARKET. I can't say where he is, Miss Jenny. (*Aside.*) Lyin' unburied in the woods, where he was shot, I 'm afraid.

JENNY. When Captain Heartsease does rejoin the regiment, Barket, please say to him for me, that—that I—I may have some orders for him, when we next meet. (*Exit, on veranda.*)

BARKET. Whin they nixt mate. They tell us there is no such thing as marriage in Hiven. If Miss Jenny and Captain Heartsease mate there, they 'll invint somethin' that 's mighty like it. While I was lyin' wounded in General Buckthorn's house at Washington, last summer, and ould Margery was taking care of me, Margery tould me, confidentially, that they was in love wid aitch ither; and I think she was about right. I've often seen Captain Heartsease take a sly look at a little lace handkerchief, just before we wint into battle. (*Looking off the stage.*) Here 's General Buckthorn himself. He and I must make it as aisy as we can for Miss Jenny's poor heart.

(*Enter* GENERAL BUCKTHORN.)

BUCK. Sergeant Barket! You have n't started with those girls yet?

BARKET. They 're to go in half an hour, sir.

BUCK. Be sure they do go. Is General Haverill here?

BARKET. Yes, sur; in the house with some of his staff, and the Surgeon.

BUCK. Ah! The Surgeon. How is Col-

onel West, this morning, after the wound he received last night?

BARKET. He says, himself, that he's as well as iver he was; but the Colonel and Surgeon don't agray on that subject. The dochter says he must n't lave his room for a month. The knife wint dape; and there's somethin' wrong inside of him. But the Colonel, bein' on the outside himsilf, can't see it. He 's as cross as a bear, baycause they would n't let him go to the front this morning, at the head of his regiment. I happened to raymark that the Chaplain was prayin' for his raycovery. The Colonel said he'd courtmartial him if he did n't stop that—quick; there's more important things for the Chaplain to pray for in his official capacity. Just at that moment the trumpets sounded, "Boots and Saddles." I had to dodge one of his boots, and the Surgeon had a narrow escape from the ither one. It was lucky for us both his saddle was n't in the room.

BUCK. That looks encouraging. I think Kerchival will get on.

BARKET. Might I say a word to you, sur, about Miss Jenny?

BUCK. Certainly, Barket. You and old Margery and myself have been a sort of triangular mother, so to speak, to the little girl since her own poor mother left her to our care, when she was only a baby, in the old fort on the Plains. (*He unconsciously rests his arm over* BARKET'S *shoulder, familiarly, and then suddenly draws up.*) Ahem! (*Gruffly.*) What is it? Proceed.

BARKET. Her mother's bosom would have been the softest place for her poor little head to rest upon, now, sur.

BUCK. (*Touching his eyes.*) Well!

BARKET. Ould Margery tould me in Washington that Miss Jenny and Captain Heartsease were in love wid aitch ither.

BUCK. (*Starting.*) In love!

BARKET. I approved of the match.

BUCK. What the devil!

(BARKET *salutes quickly and starts up stage and out.* BUCKTHORN *moves up after him, and stops at the post.* BARKET *stops in the road.*)

BARKET. So did ould Margery.

BUCK. (*Angrily.*) March! (BARKET *salutes suddenly and marches off.*) Heartsease! That young jackanapes! A mere fop; he 'll never make a soldier. My girl in love with—bah! I don't believe it; she 's too good a soldier, herself.

(*Enter* HAVERILL, *on the veranda.*)

Ah, Haverill!

HAVER. General Buckthorn! Have you heard anything of General Sheridan since I sent that dispatch to him last evening?

BUCK. He received it at midnight and sent back word that he considers it a ruse of the enemy. General Wright agrees with him. The reconnoissance yesterday showed no hostile force, on our right, and Crook reports that Early is retreating up the valley. But General Sheridan may, perhaps, give up his journey to Washington, and he has ordered some changes in our line, to be executed this afternoon at four o'clock. I rode over to give you your instructions in person. You may order General McCuen to go into camp on the right of Meadow Brook, with the second division.

(HAVERILL *is writing in his note-book.*)

(*Enter* JENNY, *on the veranda.*)

JENNY. Oh, Father! I 'm so glad you 've come. I 've got something to say to you.

(*Running down and jumping into his arms, kissing him. He turns with her, and sets her down, squarely on her feet and straight before him.*)

BUCK. And I 've got something to say to you—about Captain Heartsease.

JENNY. Oh! That 's just what I wanted to talk about.

BUCK. Fall in! Front face! (*She jumps into military position, turning towards him.*) What 's this I hear from Sergeant Barket? He says you 've been falling in love.

JENNY. I have. (*Saluting.*)

BUCK. Young woman! Listen to my orders. Fall out! (*Turns sharply and marches to* HAVERILL.) Order the Third Brigade of Cavalry, under Colonel Lowell, to occupy the left of the pike.

JENNY. Father! (*Running to him and seizing the tail of his coat.*) Father, dear!

BUCK. Close in Colonel Powell on the extreme left—(*slapping his coat-tails out of* JENNY'S *hands, without looking around*)—and hold Custer on the second line, at Old Forge Road. That is all at present. (*Turning to* JENNY.) Goodbye, my darling! (*Kisses her.*) Remember your orders! You little pet! (*Chuckling, as he taps her chin; draws up*

suddenly and turns to HAVERILL.) General! I bid you good-day.

HAVER. Good-day, General Buckthorn.

(*They salute with great dignity.* BUCKTHORN *starts up stage;* JENNY *springs after him, seizing his coat-tails.*)

JENNY. But I want to talk with you, Father; I can't fall out. I—I—have n't finished yet.

(*Clinging to his coat, as* BUCKTHORN *marches out rapidly, in the road, holding back with all her might.*)

HAVER. It may have been a ruse of the enemy, but I hope that General Sheridan has turned back from Washington. (*Looking at his note-book.*) We are to make changes in our line at four o'clock this afternoon. (*Returning the book to his pocket, he stands in thought.*) The Surgeon tells me that Kerchival West will get on well enough if he remains quiet; otherwise not. He shall not die by the hand of a common assassin; he has no right to die like that. My wife gave my own picture of herself to him—not to my son—and she looked so like an angel when she took it from my hand! They were both false to me, and they have been true to each other. I will save his life for myself.

(*Enter* GERTRUDE, *on the veranda.*)

GERT. General Haverill! (*Anxiously, coming down.*) Colonel West persists in disobeying the injunctions of the Surgeon. He is preparing to join his regiment at the front. Give him your orders to remain here. Compel him to be prudent!

HAVER. (*Quickly.*) The honor of death at the front is not in reserve for him.

GERT. Eh? What did you say, General?

HAVER. Gertrude! I wish to speak to you, as your father's old friend; and I was once your guardian. Your father was my senior officer in the Mexican War. Without his care I should have been left dead in a foreign land. He, himself, afterwards fell fighting for the old flag.

GERT. The old flag. (*Aside.*) My father died for it, and he—(*looking toward the left*)—is suffering for it—the old flag!

HAVER. I can now return the kindness your father did to me, by protecting his daughter from something that may be worse than death.

GERT. What do you mean?

HAVER. Last night I saw you kneeling at the side of Kerchival West; you spoke to him with all the tender passion of a Southern woman. You said you loved him. But you spoke into ears that could not hear you. Has he ever heard those words from your lips? Have you ever confessed your love to him before?

GERT. Never. Why do you ask?

HAVER. Do not repeat those words. Keep your heart to yourself, my girl.

GERT. General! Why do you say this to me? And at such a moment—when his life—

HAVER. His life! (*Turning sharply.*) It belongs to me!

GERT. Oh!

KER. Sergeant! (*Without. He steps into the road, looking back.* HAVERILL *comes down.*) See that my horse is ready at once. General! (*Saluting.*) Are there any orders for my regiment beyond those given to Major Wilson, in my absence, this morning? I am about to ride on after the troops and reassume my command.

HAVER. (*Quietly.*) It is my wish, Colonel, that you remain here under the care of the Surgeon.

KER. My wound is a mere trifle. This may be a critical moment in the campaign, and I cannot rest here. I must be with my own men.

HAVER. (*Quietly.*) I beg to repeat the wish I have already expressed.

(KERCHIVAL *walks to him, and speaks apart, almost under his breath, but very earnest in tone.*)

KER. I have had no opportunity, yet, to explain certain matters, as you requested me to do yesterday; but whatever there may be between us, you are now interfering with my duty and my privilege as a soldier; and it is my right to be at the head of my regiment.

HAVER. (*Quietly.*) It is my positive order that you do not reassume your command.

KER. General Haverill, I protest against this—

HAVER. (*Quietly.*) You are under arrest, sir.

KER. Arrest!

GERT. Ah!

(KERCHIVAL *unclasps his belt and offers his sword to* HAVERILL.)

HAVER. (*Quietly.*) Keep your sword; I have no desire to humiliate you; but hold yourself subject to further orders from me.

KER. My regiment at the front!—and I under arrest! (*Exit.*)

HAVER. Gertrude! If your heart refuses to be silent—if you feel that you must confess your love to that man—first tell him what I have said to you, and refer him to me for an explanation. (*Exit.*)

GERT. What can he mean? He would save me from something worse than death, he said. "His life—It belongs to me!" What can he mean? Kerchival told me that he loved me—it seems many years since that morning in Charleston—and when we met again, yesterday, he said that he had never ceased to love me. I will not believe that he has told me a falsehood. I have given him my love, my whole soul and my faith. (*Drawing up to her full height.*) My perfect faith!

(JENNY *runs in, to the road, and up the slope. She looks down the hill, then toward the left and enters.*)

JENNY. A flag of truce, Gertrude. And a party of Confederate soldiers, with an escort, coming up the hill. They are carrying someone; he is wounded.

(*Enter, up the slope, a Lieutenant of Infantry with an escort of Union Soldiers, their arms at right shoulder, and a party of Confederate Soldiers bearing a rustic stretcher.* LIEUTENANT FRANK BEDLOE *lies on the stretcher.* MAJOR HARDWICK, *a Confederate Surgeon, walks at his side.* MADELINE *appears at the veranda, watching them.* GERTRUDE *stands with her back to the audience. The Lieutenant gives orders in a low tone, and the front escort moves toward the right, in the road. The Confederate bearers and the Surgeon pass through the gate. The rear escort moves on in the road, under the Lieutenant's orders. The bearers halt in the front of the stage; on a sign from the Surgeon, they leave the stretcher on the ground, stepping back.*)

MAJ. HARD. Is General Haverill here?

GERT. Yes; what can we do, sir?

MAD. The General is just about mounting with his staff, to ride away. Shall I go for him, sir?

MAJ. Say to him, please, that Colonel Robert Ellingham, of the Tenth Virginia, sends his respects and sympathy. He instructed me to bring this young officer to this point, in exchange for himself, as agreed upon between them last evening. (*Exit* MADELINE.)

JENNY. Is he unconscious or sleeping, sir?

MAJ. Hovering between life and death. I thought he would bear the removal better. He is waking. Here, my lad! (*Placing his canteen to the lips of* FRANK, *who moves, reviving.*) We have reached the end of our journey.

FRANK. My father!

MAJ. He is thinking of his home.

(FRANK *rises on one arm, assisted by the Surgeon.*)

FRANK. I have obeyed General Haverill's orders, and I have a report to make.

GERT. We have already sent for him. (*Stepping to him.*) He will be here in a moment.

FRANK. (*Looking into her face, brightly.*) Is not this—Miss—Gertrude Ellingham?

GERT. You know me? You have seen me before?

FRANK. Long ago! Long ago! You know the wife of General Haverill?

GERT. I have no dearer friend in the world.

FRANK. She will give a message for me to the dearest friend *I* have in the world. My little wife! I must not waste even the moment we are waiting. Doctor! My note-book! (*Trying to get it from his coat. The Surgeon takes it out. A torn and blood-stained lace handkerchief also falls out.* GERTRUDE *kneels at his side.*) Ah! I—I—have a message from another—(*holding up the handkerchief*)—from Captain Heartsease. (JENNY *makes a quick start towards him.*) He lay at my side in the hospital, when they brought me away; he had only strength enough to put this in my hand, and he spoke a woman's name; but I—I—forget what it is. The red spots upon it are the only message he sent.

(GERTRUDE *takes the handkerchief and looks back at* JENNY, *extending her hand.* JENNY *moves to her, takes the handkerchief and turns back, looking down on it. She drops her face into her hands and goes out sobbing, on the veranda.*)

(*Enter* MADELINE *on the veranda.*)

MAD. General Haverill is coming. I was just in time. He was already on his horse.

FRANK. Ah! He is coming. (*Then suddenly.*) Write! Write! (GERTRUDE *writes in the note-book as he dictates.*) "To—my wife—Edith:—Tell our little son, when he is old enough to know—how

his father died; not how he lived. And tell her who filled my own mother's place so lovingly—she is your mother, too—that my father's portrait of her, which she gave to me in Charleston, helped me to be a better man!" And—Oh! I must not forget this—"It was taken away from me while I was a prisoner in Richmond, and it is in the possession of Captain Edward Thornton, of the Confederate Secret Service. But her face is still beside your own in my heart. My best—warmest, last—love—to you, darling." I will sign it.

(GERTRUDE *holds the book, and he signs it, then sinks back very quietly, supported by the Surgeon.* GERTRUDE *rises and walks away.*)

MAD. General Haverill is here.

(*The Surgeon lays the fold of the blanket over* FRANK'S *face and rises.*)

GERT. Doctor!

MAJ. He is dead.

(MADELINE, *on the veranda, turns and looks away. The Lieutenant orders the guard, "Present Arms."*)

(*Enter* HAVERILL, *on the veranda. He salutes the guard as he passes. The Lieutenant orders, "Carry Arms."* HAVERILL *comes down.*)

HAVER. I am too late?

MAJ. I'm sorry, General. His one eager thought as we came was to reach here in time to see you.

(HAVERILL *moves to the bier, looks down at it, then folds back the blanket from the face. He starts slightly as he first sees it.*)

HAVER. Brave boy! I hoped once to have a son like you. I shall be in your father's place to-day, at your grave. (*He replaces the blanket and steps back.*) We will carry him to his comrades in the front. He shall have a soldier's burial, in sight of the mountain-top beneath which he sacrificed his young life; that shall be his monument.

MAJ. Pardon me, General. We Virginians are your enemies, but you cannot honor this young soldier more than we do. Will you allow my men the privilege of carrying him to his grave?

(HAVERILL *inclines his head. The Surgeon motions to the Confederate Soldiers, who step to the bier and raise it gently.*)

HAVER. Lieutenant!

(*The Lieutenant orders the guard "Left Face." The Confederate bearers move through the gate, preceded by* LIEUTENANT HARDWICK. HAVERILL *draws his sword. reverses it, and moves up behind the bier with bowed head. The Lieutenant orders "Forward March," and the cortège disappears. While the girls are still watching it, the heavy sound of distant artillery is heard, with booming reverberations among the hills and in the valley.*)

MAD. What is that sound, Gertrude?

GERT. Listen!

(*Another and more prolonged distant sound, with long reverberations.*)

MAD. Again! Gertrude!

(GERTRUDE *raises her hand to command silence; listens. Distant cannon again.*)

GERT. It is the opening of a battle.

MAD. Ah! (*Running down stage. The sounds are heard again, prolonged.*)

GERT. How often have I heard that sound! (*Coming down.*) This is war, Madeline! You are face to face with it now.

MAD. And Robert is there! He may be in the thickest of the danger—at this very moment.

GERT. Yes. Let our prayers go up for him; mine do, with all a sister's heart.

(KERCHIVAL *enters on veranda, without coat or vest, his sash about his waist, looking back as he comes in.*)

Kerchival!

KER. Go on! Go on! Keep the battle to yourselves. I'm out of it. (*The distant cannon and reverberations are rising in volume.*)

MAD. I pray for Robert Ellingham—and for the *cause* in which he risks his life! (KERCHIVAL *looks at her, suddenly; also* GERTRUDE.) Heaven forgive me if I am wrong, but I am praying for the enemies of my country. His people are my people, his enemies are my enemies. Heaven defend him and his, in this awful hour.

KER. Madeline! My sister!

MAD. Oh, Kerchival! (*Turning and dropping her face on his breast.*) I cannot help it—I cannot help it!

KER. My poor girl! Every woman's heart, the world over, belongs not to any country or any flag, but to her husband—and her lover. Pray for the man you love, sister—it would be treason not to. (*Passes her before him to the left of the stage. Looks across to* GERTRUDE.) Am

I right? (GERTRUDE *drops her head.* MADELINE *moves up veranda and out.*) Is what I have said to Madeline true?

GERT. Yes! (*Looks up.*) Kerchival!

KER. Gertrude! (*Hurries across to her, clasps her in his arms. He suddenly staggers and brings his hand to his breast.*)

GERT. Your wound!

(*Supporting him as he reels and sinks into seat.*)

KER. Wound! I have no wound! You do love me! (*Seizing her hand.*)

GERT. Let me call the Surgeon, Kerchival.

KER. You can be of more service to me than he can. (*Detaining her. Very heavy sounds of the battle; she starts, listening.*) Never mind that! It's only a battle. You love me!

GERT. Be quiet, Kerchival, dear. I do love you. I told you so, when you lay bleeding here, last night. But you could not hear me. (*At his side, resting her arm about him, stroking his head.*) I said that same thing to—to—another, more than three years ago. It is in that letter that General Buckthorn gave you. (KERCHIVAL *starts.*) No—no—you must be very quiet, or I will not say another word. If you obey me, I will repeat that part of the letter, every word; I know it by heart, for I read it a dozen times. The letter is from Mrs. Haverill.

KER. (*Quietly.*) Go on.

GERT. "I have kept your secret, my darling, but I was sorely tempted to betray the confidence you reposed in me at Charleston. If Kerchival West—(*she retires backward from him as she proceeds*) —had heard you say, as I did, when your face was hidden in my bosom, that night, that you loved him with your whole heart—"

KER. Ah!

(*Starting to his feet. He sinks back. She springs to support him.*)

GERT. I will go for help.

KER. Do not leave me at such a moment as this. You have brought me a new life. (*Bringing her to her knees before him and looking down at her.*) Heaven is just opening before me. (*His hands drop suddenly and his head falls back.*)

GERT. Ah! Kerchival! You are dying!

(*Musketry. A sudden sharp burst of musketry, mingled with the roar of artillery near by.* KERCHIVAL *starts, seizing* GERTRUDE'S *arm and holding her away, still on her knees. He looks eagerly toward the left.*)

KER. The enemy is close upon us!

(BARKET *runs in, up the slope.*)

BARKET. Colonel Wist! The devils have sprung out of the ground. They're pouring over our lift flank like Noah's own flood. The Union Army has started back for Winchester, on its way to the North Pole; our own regiment, Colonel, is coming over the hill in full retrate.

KER. My own regiment! (*Starting up.*) Get my horse, Barket. (*Turns.*) Gertrude, my life! (*Embraces* GERTRUDE.)

BARKET. Your horse is it? I'm wid ye! There's a row at Finnegan's ball, and we're in it. (*Springs to the road, and runs out.*)

KER. (*Turns away. Stops.*) I am under arrest.

(*The retreat begins. Fugitives begin to straggle across the stage from the left.*)

GERT. You must not go, Kerchival; it will kill you.

KER. Arrest be damned! (*Starts up toward the center, raising his arms above his head with clenched fist, and rising to full height.*) Stand out of my way, you cowards!

(*They cower away from him as he rushes out among them. The stream of fugitives passing across the stage swells in volume.* GERTRUDE *runs through them and up to the elevation, turning.*)

GERT. Men! Are you soldiers? Turn back! There is a leader for you! Turn back! Fight for your flag—and mine!—the flag my father died for! Turn back! (*She looks out toward the left and then turns toward the front.*) He has been marked for death already, and I—I can only pray. (*Dropping to her knees.*)

(*The stream of fugitives continues, now over the elevation also. Rough and torn uniforms, bandaged arms and legs; some limping and supported by others, some dragging their muskets after them, others without muskets, others using them as crutches. There is a variety of uniforms, both cavalry and infantry; flags are draggled on the ground, the rattle of near musketry and roar of cannon continue; two or three wounded fugitives drop down beside the hedge.* BENSON *staggers in and drops upon a rock near the post. Artillerists, rough, torn and wounded, drag and*

force a field-piece across. CORPORAL DUNN, *wounded, staggers to the top of elevation. There is a lull in the sounds of the battle. Distant cheers are heard without.*)

DUNN. Listen, fellows! Stop! Listen! Sheridan! General Sheridan is coming! (*Cheers from those on stage.* GERTRUDE *rises quickly. The wounded soldiers rise, looking over the hedge. All on stage stop, looking eagerly toward the left. The cheers without come nearer, with shouts of "Sheridan! Sheridan!"*) The horse is down; he is worn out.

GERT. No! He is up again! He is on my Jack! Now, for your life, Jack, and for me! You've never failed me yet. (*The cheers without now swell to full volume and are taken up by those on the stage. The horse sweeps by with General Sheridan.*) Jack! Jack!! Jack!!!

(*Waving her arms as he passes. She throws up her arms and falls backward, caught by* DUNN. *The stream of men is reversed and surges across the stage to the left, in the road and on the elevation, with shouts, and throwing up of hats. The field-piece is forced up the slope with a few bold, rough movements; the artillerists are loading it, and the stream of returning fugitives is still surging by in the road as the curtain falls.*)

ACT FOURTH.

A living room in the residence of GENERAL BUCKTHORN *in Washington. There is a fireplace slanting upward from the left toward the center of the stage. On the right toward the center there is a small alcove. On the left there is an opening to the hall with a stair-case beyond. There is a door on the right and a wide opening with portières leads on the left toward another room. There is an upright piano toward the front of the stage on the right and an armchair and low stool stand before the fireplace. A small table is set for tea. It is afternoon;* MRS. HAVERILL, *in an armchair, is resting her face upon her hand, and looking into the fire.* EDITH *is on a low stool at her side, sewing a child's garment.*

EDITH. It seems hardly possible that the war is over, and that General Lee has really surrendered. There is music in the streets nearly all the time, now, and everybody looks so cheerful and bright. (*Distant fife and drums are heard playing "Johnnie Comes Marching Home."* EDITH *springs up and runs up to window, looking out.*) More troops returning! The old tattered battle-flag is waving in the wind, and people are running after them so merrily. Every day, now, seems like a holiday. The war is over. All the women ought to feel very happy, whose—whose husbands are—coming back to them.

MRS. H. Yes, Edith; those women whose—husbands are coming back to them. (*Still looking into the fire.*)

EDITH. Oh! (*Dropping upon the stool, her head upon the arm of the chair.*)

MRS. H. (*Resting her arm over her.*) My poor, little darling! *Your* husband will not come back.

EDITH. Frank's last message has never reached me.

MRS. H. No; but you have one sweet thought always with you. Madeline West heard part of it, as Gertrude wrote it down. His last thought was a loving one, of you.

EDITH. Madeline says that he was thinking of you, too. He knew that you were taking such loving care of his little one, and of me. You have always done that, since you first came back from Charleston, and found me alone in New York.

MRS. H. I found a dear, sweet little daughter. (*Stroking her head.*) Heaven sent you, darling! You have been a blessing to me. I hardly know how I should have got through the past few months at all without you at my side.

EDITH. What is your own trouble, dear? I have found you in tears so often; and since last October, after the battle of Cedar Creek, you—you have never shown me a letter from—from my—Frank's father. General Haverill arrived in Washington yesterday, but has not been here yet. Is it because I am here? He has never seen me, and I fear that he has never forgiven Frank for marrying me.

MRS. H. Nonsense, my child; he did think the marriage was imprudent, but he told me to do everything I could for you. If General Haverill has not been to see either of us, since his arrival in Washington, it is nothing that you need to worry your dear little head about. How are you getting on with your son's wardrobe?

EDITH. Oh! Splendidly! Frankie is n't a baby any longer; he 's a man, now, and he has to wear a man's clothes. (*Holding up a little pair of trousers, with maternal pride.*) He 's rather young to be dressed like a man, but I want Frank to grow up as soon as possible. I long to have him old enough to understand me when I repeat to him the words in which General Haverill told the whole world how his father died! (*Rising.*) And yet, even in his official report to the Government, he only honored him as Lieutenant Bedloe. He has never forgiven his son for the disgrace he brought upon his name.

MRS. H. I know him so well—(*rising*)—the unyielding pride, that conquers even the deep tenderness of his nature. He can be silent, though his own heart is breaking. (*Aside.*) He can be silent, too, though *my* heart is breaking. (*Dropping her face in her hand.*)

EDITH. *Mother!* (*Putting her arm about her.*)

(*Enter* JANNETTE.)

JAN. A letter for you, Madam.

MRS. H. (*Taking note. Aside.*) He has answered me. (*She opens and reads the letter, and inclines her head to* JANNETTE, *who goes out to the hall. Aloud.*) General Haverill will be here this afternoon, Edith. (*Exit.*)

EDITH. There is something that she cannot confide to me, or to anyone. General Haverill returned to Washington yesterday, and he has not been here yet. He will be here to-day. I always tremble when I think of meeting him.

(GENERAL BUCKTHORN *appears in the hall.*)

BUCK. Come right in; this way, Barket. Ah, Edith!

BARKET. (*Entering.*) As I was saying, sur—just after the battle of Sayder Creek began—

BUCK. (*To* EDITH.) More good news! The war is, indeed, over now!

BARKET. Whin Colonel Wist rode to the front to mate his raytrating rigiment—

BUCK. General Johnston has surrendered his army, also; and that, of course, does end the war.

EDITH. I 'm very glad that all the fighting is over.

BUCK. So am I; but my occupation, and old Barket's, too, is gone. Always at work on new clothes for our little soldier?

EDITH. He 's growing so, I can hardly make them fast enough for him. But this is the time for his afternoon nap. I must go now, to see if he is sleeping soundly.

BUCK. Our dear little mother! (*Tapping her chin.*) I always claim the privilege of my white hair, you know. (*She puts up her lips; he kisses her. She goes out.*) The sweetest young widow I ever saw! (BARKET *coughs.* BUCKTHORN *turns sharply;* BARKET *salutes.*) Well! What the devil are you thinking about now?

BARKET. The ould time, sur. Yer honor used to claim the same privilege for brown hair.

BUCK. You old rascal! What a memory you have! You were telling me for the hundredth time about the battle of Cedar Creek; go on. I can never hear it often enough. Kerchival West was a favorite of mine, poor fellow!

BARKET. Just afther the battle of Sayder Creek began, when the Colonel rode to the front to mate his raytrating rigiment—

BUCK. I 'll tell Old Margery to bring in tea for both of us, Barket.

BARKET. For both of us, sur?

BUCK. Yes; and later in the evening we 'll have something else, together. This is a great day for all of us. I 'm not your commander to-day, but your old comrade in arms—(*Laying his arm over* BARKET'S *shoulder*)—and I 'm glad I don't have to pull myself up now every time I forget my dignity. Ah! you and I will be laid away before long, but we 'll be together again in the next world, won't we, Barket?

BARKET. Wid yer honor's permission. (*Saluting.*)

BUCK. Ha—ha—ha! (*Laughing.*) If we do meet there, I 'm certain you 'll salute me as your superior officer. There 's old Margery, now. (*Looking toward the door and calling.*) Margery! Tea for two!

MARGERY. (*Without.*) The tay be waiting for ye, sur; and it be boilin' over wid impatience.

BUCK. Bring up a chair, Barket.

(*Sitting down in the arm-chair.*)

BARKET. (*Having placed table and drawing up a chair.*) Do you know, Gineral, I don't fale quite aisy in my moind. I 'm not quite sure that Margery will let us take our tay together.

(*Sits down, doubtfully.*)

BUCK. I hadn't thought of that. I— (*Glancing to the right.*)—I hope she will, Barket. But, of course, if she won't— she's been commander-in-chief of my household ever since Jenny was a baby.

BARKET. At Fort Duncan, in Texas.

BUCK. You and Old Margery never got along very well in those days; but I thought you had made it all up; she nursed you through your wound, last summer, and after the battle of Cedar Creek, also.

BARKET. Yis, sur, bliss her kind heart, she's been like a wife to me; and that's the trouble. A man's wife is such an angel when he's ill that he dreads to get well; good health is a misfortune to him. Auld Margery and I have had anither misunderstanding.

BUCK. I'll do the best I can for both of us, Barket. You were telling me about the battle of—

BARKET. Just afther the battle of Sayder Creek began, whin Colonel Wist rode to the front to mate his raytrating rigiment—

(*Enter* OLD MARGERY, *with a tea-tray. She stops abruptly, looking at* BARKET. *He squirms in his chair.* BUCKTHORN *rises and stands with his back to the mantel.* OLD MARGERY *moves to the table, arranges things on it, glances at* BARKET, *then at* BUCKTHORN, *who looks up at the ceiling, rubbing his chin.* OLD MARGERY *takes up one of the cups, with saucer.*)

OLD MARG. I misunderstood yer order, sur. I see there's no one here but yerself. (*Going.*)

BUCK. Ah, Margery! (*She stops.*) Barket tells me that there has been a slight misunderstanding between you and him.

OLD MARG. Day before yisterday, the ould Hibernian dhrone had the kitchen upside down, to show anither old milithary vagabone loike himself how the battle of Sayder Creek was fought. He knocked the crame pitcher into the basket of clane clothes, and overturned some raspberry jam and the flat-irons into a pan of fresh eggs. There *has* been a misunderstanding betwane us.

BUCK. I see there has. I suppose Barket was showing his friend how Colonel Kerchival West rode forward to meet his regiment, when he was already wounded dangerously.

OLD MARG. Bliss the poor, dear young man! He and I was always good frinds, though he was something of a devil in the kitchen himself, whin he got there. (*Wiping her eye with one corner of her apron.*) And bliss the young Southern lady that was in love wid him, too. (*Changing the cup and wiping the other eye with the corner of her apron.*) Nothing was iver heard of ayther of thim after that battle was over, to this very day.

BUCK. Barket was at Kerchival's side when he rode to the front. (OLD MARGERY *hesitates a moment, then moves to the table, sets down the cup and marches out.* BUCKTHORN *sits in the arm-chair again, pouring tea.*) I could always find some way to get Old Margery to do what I wanted her to do.

BARKET. You're a great man, Gineral; we'd niver have conquered the South widout such men.

BUCK. Now go on, Barket; you were interrupted.

BARKET. Just afther the battle of Sayder Creek began, whin—

(*Enter* JANNETTE, *with a card, which she hands to* BUCKTHORN.)

BUCK. (*Reading card.*) Robert Ellingham! (*Rises.*) I will go to him. (*To* JANNETTE.) Go upstairs and tell Miss Madeline to come down.

JANNETTE. Yes, sir. (*Going.*)

BUCK. And, Jannette, simply say there is a caller; don't tell her who is here. (*Exit* JANNETTE. BUCKTHORN *follows her out to the hall.*) Ellingham! My dear fellow!

(*Extending his hand and disappearing.*)

BARKET. Colonel Ellingham and Miss Madeline—lovers! That's the kind o' volunteers the country nades now!

(*Enter* BUCKTHORN *and* ELLINGHAM.)

BUCK. (*As he enters.*) We've been fighting four years to keep you out of Washington, Colonel, but we are delighted to see you within the lines, now.

ELLING. I am glad, indeed, General, to have so warm a welcome. But can you tell me anything about my sister, Gertrude?

BUCK. About your sister? Why, can't you tell us? And have you heard nothing of Kerchival West on your side of the line?

ELLING. All I can tell you is this: As soon as possible after our surrender at Appomattox, I made my way to the Shenandoah Valley. Our home there is utterly deserted. I have hurried down to Washington in the hopes that I might learn something of you. There is no human being about the old homestead; it is like a haunted house—empty, and dark, and solitary. You do not even know where Gertrude is?

BUCK. We only know that Kerchival was not found among the dead of his own regiment at Cedar Creek, though he fell among them during the fight. The three girls searched the field for him, but he was not there. As darkness came on, and they were returning to the house, Gertrude suddenly seized the bridle of a stray horse, sprang upon its back and rode away to the South, into the woods at the foot of Three Top Mountain. The other two girls watched for her in vain. She did not return, and we have heard nothing from her since.

ELLING. Poor girl! I understand what was in her thoughts, and she was right. We captured fourteen hundred prisoners that day, although we were defeated, and Kerchival must have been among them. Gertrude rode away, alone, in the darkness, to find him. I shall return to the South at once and learn where she now is.

(JANNETTE *has re-entered, down the stairs.*)

JANNETTE. Miss Madeline will be down in a moment. (*Exit in hall.*)

BARKET. (*Aside.*) That name wint through his chist like a rifle ball.

BUCK. Will you step into the drawing-room, Colonel? I will see Madeline myself, first. She does not even know that you are living.

ELLING. I hardly dared ask for her. Is she well?

BUCK. Yes; and happy—or soon will be.

ELLING. Peace, at last!

(*Exit to the apartment.* BUCKTHORN *closes the portières.*)

BUCK. I ought to prepare Madeline a little, Barket; you must help me.

BARKET. Yis, sur, I will.

(*Enter* MADELINE, *down the stairs.*)

MADELINE. Uncle! Jannette said you wished to see me; there is a visitor here. Who is it?

BARKET. Colonel Robert Ellingham.

MAD. Ah! (*Staggering.*)

BUCK. (*Supporting her.*) You infernal idiot! I'll put you in the guard-house!

BARKET. You wanted me to help ye, Gineral.

MAD. Robert is alive—and here?

(*Rising from his arms, she moves to the portières, holds them aside, peeping in; gives a joyful start, tosses aside the portières and runs through.*)

BUCK. Barket! There's nothing but that curtain between us and Heaven.

BARKET. I don't like stayin' out o' Hiven, myself, sur. Gineral! I'll kiss Ould Margery—if I die for it! (*Exit.*)

BUCK. Kiss Old Margery! I'll give him a soldier's funeral.

(*Enter* JENNY *from hall, demurely.*)

Ah! Jenny, my dear! I have news for you. Colonel Robert Ellingham is in the drawing-room.

JENNY. Oh! I am delighted. (*Starting.*)

BUCK. A-h-e-m!

JEN. Oh!—exactly. I see. I have some news for *you,* papa. Captain Heartsease has arrived in Washington.

BUCK. Oh! My dear! I have often confessed to you how utterly mistaken I was about that young man. He is a soldier—as good a soldier as you are. I'll ask him to the house.

JEN. (*Demurely.*) He is here now.

BUCK. Now?

JEN. He's been here an hour; in the library.

BUCK. Why! Barket and I were in the library fifteen minutes ago.

JEN. Yes, sir. We were in the bay-window; the curtains were closed.

BUCK. Oh! exactly; I see. You may tell him he has my full consent.

JEN. He has n't asked for it.

BUCK. Has n't he? And you've been in the bay-window an hour? Well, my darling—I was considered one of the best Indian fighters in the old army, but it took me four years to propose to your mother. I'll go and see the Captain. (*Exit.*)

JEN. I wonder if it will take Captain Heartsease four years to propose to me. Before he left Washington, nearly two years ago, he told everybody in the circle of my acquaintance, except me, that he was in love with me. I'll be an old lady in caps before our engagement com-

mences. Poor, dear mother! The idea of a girl's waiting four years for a chance to say, "Yes." It 's been on the tip of my tongue so often, I 'm afraid it 'll pop out, at last, before he pops the question.

(*Enter* BUCKTHORN *and* HEARTSEASE *from the hall.*)

BUCK. Walk right in, Captain; this is the family room. You must make yourself quite at home here.

HEARTSEASE. Thank you.

(*Walking down toward the right.*)

BUCK. My dear! (*Apart to* JENNY.) The very first thing he said to me, after our greeting, was that he loved my daughter.

JEN. Now he 's told my father!

BUCK. He 's on fire!

JEN. Is he? (*Looking at* HEARTSEASE, *who stands quietly stroking his mustache.*) Why does n't he tell *me?*

BUCK. You may have to help him a little; your mother assisted me. When you and Jenny finish your chat, Captain—(*Lighting a cigar at the mantel*)—you must join me in the smoking room.

HEART. I shall be delighted. By the way, General—I have been in such a fever of excitement since I arrived at this house—

JEN. (*Aside.*) Fever? Chills!

HEART. That I forgot it entirely. I have omitted a very important and a very sad commission. I have brought with me the note-book of Lieutenant Frank Bedloe—otherwise Haverill—in which Miss Gertrude Ellingham wrote down his last message to his young wife.

JEN. Have you seen Gertrude?

BUCK. (*Taking the book.*) How did this note-book come into your possession?

HEART. Miss Ellingham visited the prison in North Carolina where I was detained. She was going from hospital to hospital, from prison to prison, and from burial-place to burial-place, to find Colonel Kerchival West, if living—or some record of his death.

BUCK. Another Evangeline! Searching for her lover through the wilderness of this great war!

HEART. I was about to be exchanged at the time, and she requested me to bring this to her friends in Washington. She had not intended to carry it away with her. I was not exchanged, as we then expected, but I afterwards escaped from prison to General Sherman's Army.

BUCK. I will carry this long-delayed message to the widowed young mother.

(*Exit.*)

JEN. I remember so well, when poor Lieutenant Haverill took out the note-book and asked Gertrude to write for him. He—he brought me a message at the same time.

(*Their eyes meet. He puts up his glasses. She turns away, touching her eyes.*)

HEART. I—I remember the circumstances you probably allude to; that is—when he left my side—I—I gave him my—I mean your—lace handkerchief.

JEN. It is sacred to me!

HEART. Y-e-s—I would say—is it?

JEN. (*Wiping her eyes.*) It was stained with the life-blood of a hero!

HEART. I must apologize to you for its condition. I had n't any chance to have it washed and ironed.

JEN. (*Looking around at him, suddenly; then, aside.*) What could any girl do with a lover like that?

(*Turning up the stage.*)

HEART. (*Aside.*) She seems to remember that incident so tenderly! My blood boils!

JEN. Did n't you long to see your—your friends at home—when you were in prison, Captain?

HEART. Yes—especially—I longed especially, Miss Buckthorn, to see—

JEN. *Yes!—to see—*

HEART. But there were lots of jolly fellows in the prison.

(JENNY *turns away.*)

HEART. We had a dramatic society, and a glee club, and an orchestra. I was one of the orchestra. I had a banjo, with one string; I played one tune on it, that I used to play on the piano, with one finger. But, Miss Buckthorn, I am a prisoner again, to-night—your prisoner.

JEN. (*Aside.*) At last!

HEART. I 'll show you how that tune went.

(*Turns to the piano and sits.*)

JEN. (*Aside.*) Father said I 'd have to help him, but I don't see an opening.

(HEARTSEASE *plays part of an air with one finger and strikes two or three wrong notes.*)

HEART. There are two notes down there, somewhere, that I never could get right. The fellows in prison used to dance while I played—(*Playing*)—that is, the

lame ones did; those that were n't lame could n't keep the time.

JEN. You must have been in great danger, Captain, when you escaped from prison.

HEART. Y-e-s. I was badly frightened several times. One night I came face to face, on the road, with a Confederate Officer. It was Captain Thornton.

JEN. Oh! What did you do?

HEART. I killed him. (*Very quietly, and trying the tune again at once. Enter* JANNETTE, *from the hall; she glances into the room and goes up the stairs.*) I used to skip those two notes on the banjo. It 's very nice for a soldier to come home from the war, and meet those—I mean the one particular person—that he—you see, when a soldier loves a woman, as—as—

JEN. (*Aside.*) As he loves me. (*Approaches him.*)

HEART. As soldiers often do—(*Plays; she turns away, petulantly; he plays the tune through correctly.*) That 's it!

JEN. (*Aside.*) I 'm not going to be made love to by piece-meal, like this, any longer. (*Aloud.*) Captain Heartsease! Have you anything in particular to say to me? (*He looks up.*)

HEART. Y-e-s. (*Rising.*)

JEN. Say it! You told my father, and all my friends, that you were in love with me. Whom are you going to tell next?

HEART. I *am* in love with you.

JEN. It was my turn.

HEART. (*Going near to her.*) Do you love me?

JEN. (*Laying her head quietly on his breast.*) I must take time to consider.

HEART. (*Quietly.*) I assume that this means "Yes."

JEN. It isn 't the way a girl says "No."

HEART. My darling!

JEN. Why! His heart is beating as fast as mine is!

HEART. (*Quietly.*) I am frantic with joy. (*He kisses her. She hides her face on his breast. Enter* MRS. HAVERILL, *down-stairs, followed by* JANNETTE. MRS. HAVERILL *stops suddenly.* JANNETTE *stands in the doorway.* HEARTSEASE *inclines his head to her, quietly looking at her over* JENNY.) I am delighted to see you, after so long an absence; I trust that we shall meet more frequently hereafter.

JEN. (*Looking at him*). Eh?

HEART. (*Looking down at her.*) I think, perhaps, it might be as well for us to repair to another apartment, and continue our interview, there!

JEN. (*Dropping her head on his breast again.*) This room is very comfortable.

MRS. H. Jenny, dear!

(JENNY *starts up; looks from* MRS. HAVERILL *to* HEARTSEASE.)

JEN. Constance! I—'Bout face! March! (*She turns and goes out.*)

MRS. H. I am glad to see you again, Captain, and happy as well as safe.

HEART. Thank you, Madam. I am happy. If you will excuse me, I will join—my father—in the smoking-room.

(MRS. HAVERILL *inclines her head, and* HEARTSEASE *walks out.*)

MRS. H. Jannette! You may ask General Haverill to come into this room. (*Exit* JANNETTE. MRS. HAVERILL *walks down the stage, reading a note.*) "I have hesitated to come to you personally, as I have hesitated to write to you. If I have been silent, it is because I could not bring my hand to write what was in my mind and in my heart. I do not know that I can trust my tongue to speak it, but I will come."

(*Enter* HAVERILL, *from the hall; he stops.*)

HAVER. Constance!

MRS. H. My husband! May I call you husband? After all these months of separation, with your life in almost daily peril, and my life—what? Only a weary longing for one loving word—and you are silent.

HAVER. May I call you wife? I do not wish to speak that word except with reverence. You have asked me to come to you. I am here. I will be plain, direct and brief. Where is the portrait of yourself, which I gave you, in Charleston, for my son?

MRS. H. Your son is dead, sir; and my portrait lies upon his breast, in the grave. (HAVERILL *takes the miniature from his pocket and holds it towards her in his extended hand. She starts back.*) He gave it to you? And you ask me where it is?

HAVER. It might have lain in the grave of Kerchival West!

MRS. H. Ah!

HAVER. Not in my son's. I found it upon *his* breast. (*She turns front, dazed.*) Well! I am listening! It was not I that sought this interview,

madam; and if you prefer to remain silent, I will go. You know, now, why I have been silent so long.

MRS. H. My only witnesses to the truth are both dead. I shall remain silent. (*Turning towards him.*) We stand before each other, living, but not so happy as they. We are parted, forever. Even if you should accept my unsupported word—if I could so far forget my pride as to give it to you—suspicion would still hang between us. I remain silent.

(HAVERILL *looks at her, earnestly, for a moment, then approaches her.*)

HAVER. I cannot look into your eyes and not see truth and loyalty there. Constance!

MRS. H. No, John! (*Checking him.*) I will not accept your blind faith!

(*Moving.*)

HAVER. (*Looking down at the picture in his hand.*) My faith is blind; blind as my love! I do not wish to see!

(*Enter* EDITH. *She stops and looks at* HAVERILL. *He raises his head and looks at her.*)

EDITH. This is General Haverill? (*Dropping her eyes.*) I am Edith, sir.

HAVER. (*Gently.*) My son's wife. (*Kisses her forehead.*) You shall take the place he once filled in my heart. His crime and his disgrace are buried in a distant grave.

EDITH. And you have not forgiven him, even yet?

MRS. H. Is there no atonement for poor Frank's sin—not even his death? Can you only bury the wrong and forget the good?

HAVER. The good?

MRS. H. Your own words to the Government, as his commander!

HAVER. What do you mean?

MRS. H. "The victory of Cedar Creek would have been impossible without the sacrifice of this young officer."

HAVER. My own words, yes—but—

EDITH. "His name must take its place forever, in the roll of names which his countrymen honor."

HAVER. Lieutenant Bedloe!

MRS. H. Haverill! You did not know?

HAVER. My—son.

EDITH. You did not receive mother's letter?—after his death?

HAVER. My son! (*Sinking upon a chair.*) I left him alone in his grave, unknown; but my tears fell for him then, as they do now. He died before I reached him.

EDITH. Father! (*Laying her hand gently on his shoulder.*) You shall see Frank's face again. His little son is lying asleep upstairs; and when he wakes up, Frank's own eyes will look into yours. I have just received his last message. I will read it to you. (*She opens the notebook and reads.*) "Tell our little son how his father died, not how he lived. And tell her who filled my own mother's place so lovingly." (*She looks at* MRS. HAVERILL, *moves to her and hides her face in her bosom.*) My mother!

MRS. H. Edith—my child! Frank loved us both.

EDITH. (*Reading.*) "Father's portrait of her, which she gave to me in Charleston —(HAVERILL *starts*)—helped me to be a better man."

HAVER. (*Rising to his feet.*) Constance!

EDITH. (*Reading.*) "It was taken from me in Richmond, and it is in the possession of Captain Edward Thornton."

HAVER. One moment! Stop! Let me think! (EDITH *looks at him.*) Thornton was a prisoner—and to Kerchival West. A dispatch had been found upon him—he was searched! (*He moves to her and takes both her hands in his own, bowing his head over them.*) My head is bowed in shame.

MRS. H. Speak to me, John, as you used to speak! Tell me you still love me!

HAVER. The—the words will come—but they are—choking me—now. (*He presses her hand to his lips.*)

MRS. H. We will think no more of the past, except of what was bright in it. Frank's memory, and our own love, will be with us always.

(*Enter* BUCKTHORN, *followed by* HEARTSEASE.)

BUCK. Haverill! You are back from the war, too. It begins to look like peace in earnest.

HAVER. Yes. Peace and home.

(*Shaking hands with him.* MRS. HAVERILL *joins* EDITH.)

(*Enter* BARKET.)

BARKET. Gineral! (BUCKTHORN *moves to him.* HAVERILL *joins* MRS. HAVERILL *and* EDITH. BARKET *speaks apart, twisting one side of his face.*) I kissed her!

BUCK. Have you sent for a surgeon?

BARKET. I felt as if the inimy had sur-

prised us agin, and Sheridan was sixty miles away.

HAVER. This is old Sergeant Barket. (BARKET *salutes.*) You were the last man of us all that saw Colonel West.

BARKET. Just afther the battle of Sayder Creek began—whin Colonel Wist rode to the front to mate his retrayting rigiment—the byes formed in line, at sight of him, to raysist the victorious inimy. It was just at the brow of a hill—about there, sur—(*pointing with his cane*) and —here! (*He takes the tray from the table and sets it on the carpet, then lays the slices of bread in a row.*) That be the rigiment. (*All are interested.* MADELINE *and* ELLINGHAM *enter, and look on.* BARKET *arranges the two cups and saucers in a row.*) That be the inimy's batthery, sur.

(*Enter* MARGERY. *She goes to the table, then looks around, sharply at* BARKET.)

OLD MARG. Ye ould Hibernian dhrone! What are yez doin' wid the china on the floor? You'll break it all!

BUCK. Ah—Margery! Barket is telling us where he last saw Colonel Kerchival West.

OLD MARG. The young Colonel! The tay-cups and saucers be's the inimy's batthery? Yez may smash 'em, if ye loike!

BUCK. Go on, Barket.

(JENNY *and* HEARTSEASE *have entered, as* BARKET *proceeds, the whole party lean forward, intensely interested.* GERTRUDE *enters in the hall, looks in, beckons as if to some one without, and* KERCHIVAL *follows. They move to the center of the stage, back of the rest and listen unseen.*)

BARKET. Just as the rigiment was rayformed in line, and Colonel Wist was out in front—widout any coat or hat, and wid only a shtick in his hand—we heard cheers in the rear. Gineral Sheridan was coming! One word to the men —and we swept over the batthery like a whirlwind! (*Slashing his cane through the cups and saucers.*)

OLD MARG. Hoo-roo!

BARKET. The attack on the lift flank was checked. But when we shtopped to take breath, Colonel Wist was n't wid us. (GERTRUDE *turns lovingly to* KERCHIVAL. *He places his arm about her.*) Heaven knows where he is now. Afther the battle was over, poor Miss Gertrude wint off by hersilf into the wilderness to find him.

KER. My wife! You saved my life, at last. (*Embracing her.*)

BARKET. They 'll niver come together in this world. I saw Miss Gertrude, myself, ride away into the woods and disappear behind a school-house on the battle-field, over there.

GERT. No, Barket—(*All start and look*)—it was the little church; we were married there this morning!

SECRET SERVICE

A DRAMA OF "THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY"

IN FOUR ACTS

BY

William Gillette

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SECRET SERVICE

Secret Service represents another phase of the Civil War from that portrayed in *Shenandoah*. It is also the most representative play of its author. William Gillette was born at Hartford, Connecticut, July 24, 1855, the son of Francis Gillette, at one time Senator of the United States. At the beginning of his stage career, he took special courses at Harvard and Boston Universities and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and as early as 1875, acted in *Across the Continent* at New Orleans. His first professional appearance was at the Globe Theatre, Boston, as "Guzman" in *Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady,* September 15, 1875. After a number of stage successes, he produced his first play *The Professor* at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, June 1, 1881, in which he played "Professor Hopkins," and at the same theatre, on October 29, 1881, his play *Esmeralda,* founded on a story of Mrs. Francis Hodgson Burnett, was first performed. On September 29, 1884, he appeared at the Comedy Theatre, New York, in *Digby's Secretary,* adapted by him from Von Moser's *Der Bibliothekar.* The same night, Mr. A. M. Palmer brought out Mr. Charles Hawtrey's version of the same play, called *The Private Secretary* and a contest ensued. As Mr. Gillette had made the proper arrangements with the German playwright, while Mr. Hawtrey had not, a compromise resulted in his continuing his version, somewhat modified, under Mr. Palmer's management, under the title of *The Private Secretary.*

His first Civil War play, *Held by the Enemy,* was produced at the Criterion Theatre, Brooklyn on February 22, 1886, being the first successful play written upon the Civil War. It was afterwards produced at the Madison Square Theatre, New York City, in August, 1886. The play is laid in the South, and has as its main interest the love of a Southern girl for a Northern soldier. It was acted at the Princess Theatre, London, April 2, 1887. *A Legal Wreck,* a play dealing with the life in a sea coast town in New England, was first played at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, August 14, 1888. *All the Comforts of Home,* an amusing farce comedy, adapted from the German, was produced at the Boston Museum, March 3, 1890, and next came *Mr. Wilkinson's Widows,* a similar type of play, depicting the complications consequent upon a man marrying two women, supposedly on the same day. Its first New York production was at Proctor's Theatre, March 30, 1891. *Too Much Johnson,* his next important play, a clever farce, was first produced in Holyoke, Massachusetts, October 25, 1894, and was put on at the Standard Theatre, New York City, November 26, 1894.

For this play he borrowed from *La Plantation Thomasin,* by Maurice Ordonneau, the idea of the trip to a tropical island, but the main plot and the central characters were original. After a successful career in this country, Mr. Gillette appeared as "Augustus Billings" in this play in London, at the Garrick Theatre, April 18, 1898. In the meantime he had produced *Secret Service,* and a very successful farce comedy, *Because She Loved Him So,* from the French play, *Jalouse,* of Bisson and Leclerq, played first in New Haven, October 28, 1898. After a "tryout" at Wilkes-Barre and Buffalo, *Sherlock Holmes* was first put on in New York City at the Garrick Theatre, November 6, 1899, and after touring this country, Mr. Gillette began a long run in the title rôle at the Lyceum Theatre in London, on September 9, 1901. He next appeared in a one-act play, *The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes,* on March 23, 1905, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York City, and on September 13, 1905, at the Duke of York's Theatre in London, he played for the first time the character of "Dr. Carrington" in his comedy of *Clarice.* Returning to this country he toured in *Clarice* and then appeared at the Criterion Theatre, New York, October 19, 1908, in the character of "Maurice Brachard" in *Samson,* adapted by him from the French of Henri Bernstein. His last play, *Electricity,* produced first at the Park Theatre, Boston, September 26, 1910, was an attempt to make use of modern electrical devices in a farcical situation but was not successful. Other plays of Mr. Gillette of less significance are *She* (1887), *Settled Out of Court* (1892), *Ninety Days* (1893), *The Red Owl* (1907), *Ticey, or That Little Affair of Boyd's* (1908), *The Robber* (1909), *Among Thieves* (1909). Mr. Gillette has continued his career on the stage, taking part in the all-star revival of *Diplomacy* in 1914–15 and appearing in his own plays in 1915–16.

Secret Service was first performed at the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, as *The Secret Service,* May 13, 1895. It was at first only moderately successful, but when it was put on at the Garrick Theatre, New York, October 5, 1896, Mr. Gillette appearing in the character of "Lewis Dumont" for the first time, it was a pronounced success. The play ran until March 6, 1897, when it was taken to Boston and afterward on tour. On May 15, 1897, Mr. Gillette made his first appearance on the London stage at the Adelphi Theatre in this play, at the beginning of a run which lasted till August 4. The play was acted by English companies afterward and a French version by Pierre Decourcelle was played at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris on October 2, 1897. During the season of 1915–16 *Secret Service* was revived with Mr. Gillette in the part of "Lewis Dumont." The exact number of performances up to the present day is 1791.

In *Secret Service,* Mr. Gillette carried to its highest point the conception of a cool, resourceful man of action. This same character appears in serious situations in *Held by the Enemy* and *Sherlock Holmes,* and in farcical situations in *All the Comforts of Home* and *Too Much Johnson.* It is the unifying quality in

Mr. Gillette's work, and the form of realism which he has contributed to the stage in America is distinctly important and distinctly American.

Esmeralda, Held by the Enemy, Too Much Johnson, and *Secret Service* have been published by Samuel French and *All the Comforts of Home* by Dick and Fitzgerald. *Electricity* appeared in *The Drama,* for December, 1913, and will be reprinted shortly by Samuel French. *A Legal Wreck* has been published in novel form. For a lecture by Mr. Gillette "On the Illusion of the First Time in Acting" see the publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, Series 2, Vol. 1, New York, 1915.

For biographical details see *Who's Who in the Theatre* (1912), and for information concerning the plays, *Plays of the Present,* by J. B. Clapp and E. F. Edgett, New York, 1902, to which the present editor acknowledges his indebtedness, as also to the courtesy of Mr. Francis E. Reid, of the Empire Theatre. The editor, however, is indebted in the largest measure to Mr. Gillette himself who has furnished him accurate information concerning the dates and circumstances of production of the plays, much of which has hitherto been unavailable in print.

For criticism see Norman Hapgood, *The Stage in America,* 1901, Chap. 3, pp. 61–79.

The text has been revised with the greatest care by Mr. Gillette, and the alterations have been so marked that this edition of *Secret Service* may almost be looked upon as a new creation. It represents, so far as is possible in print, the actual stage production as Mr. Gillette directs it. For this reason, although its form is different from that of the other plays in the volume, the editor has reprinted the manuscript exactly as Mr. Gillette prepared it, feeling sure that readers of the book will be interested in seeing the interpretation of his own work by a dramatist who is also an actor and stage director.

For permission to use the text the editor is indebted to Mr. Gillette and to Samuel French.

Note to Third Edition.

In *The Dream Maker,* produced at the Empire Theatre, New York, November 21, 1921, Mr. Gillette created out of a short story by Howard E. Merton, a play whose leading character was that of Dr. Paul Clement, who to save the daughter of the woman he had loved, baffles a set of blackmailers in his own resourceful way. *Winnie and the Wolves,* based on short stories by Bertram Akey, was produced at the Lyric Theatre, Philadelphia, May 21, 1923. Mr. Gillette did not act in this play, which had as its heroine the daughter of a man who has been defrauded by certain people upon whom she becomes revenged.

Sherlock Holmes, while not published in this country, was issued by Samuel French in London in 1922. It was revived in New York in 1928.

AN EVENING IN RICHMOND DURING THE WAR OF THE REBELLION AT A TIME WHEN THE NORTHERN FORCES WERE ENTRENCHED BEFORE THE CITY AND ENDEAVORING BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS TO BREAK DOWN THE DEFENSES AND CAPTURE THE CONFEDERATE CAPITAL.

* * *

ACT I	DRAWING-ROOM AT GEN. VARNEY'S HOUSE FRANKLIN STREET	EIGHT O'CLOCK
ACT II	THE SAME PLACE	NINE O'CLOCK
ACT III	TELEGRAPH OFFICE WAR DEPARTMENT	TEN O'CLOCK
ACT IV	DRAWING-ROOM AT THE VARNEY HOUSE AGAIN	ELEVEN O'CLOCK

* * *

WHILE NO SPECIAL EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE DIRECTION OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY THE MANAGEMENT TAKES THE LIBERTY OF REMINDING THE PUBLIC THAT THE CITY OF RICHMOND AT THE TIME SET FORTH IN "SECRET SERVICE" WAS IN A STATE OF THE UTMOST EXCITEMENT AND CONFUSION. WOUNDED AND DYING WERE BEING BROUGHT IN FROM THE DEFENSES BY THE CAR-LOAD. CHURCHES, LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS WERE CONVERTED INTO HOSPITALS. OWING TO THE SCARCITY OF SURGEONS AND MEDICAL ATTENDANTS WOMEN AND EVEN YOUNG GIRLS ASSISTED AT THE DRESSING OF WOUNDS AND NURSED THE SUFFERERS DAY AND NIGHT. OTHER WOMEN WERE OCCUPIED SEWING COARSE AND HEAVY SAND BAGS FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE FORTIFICATIONS. STRICT MILITARY DISCIPLINE WAS IMPOSSIBLE. COURTS MARTIAL IF HELD AT ALL WERE COMPOSED OF ANY AVAILABLE MATERIAL, EVEN PRIVATE CITIZENS SERVING IF NECESSARY. TROOPS WERE BEING HURRIED IN FROM THE SOUTH AND NO CAREFUL SCRUTINY WAS ATTEMPTED. THIS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MANY NORTHERN SECRET SERVICE MEN TO ENTER THE CITY AND REMAIN THERE IN VARIOUS DISGUISES. IN THE MIDST OF THIS TROUBLE A BRAVE ATTEMPT AT GAYETY WAS KEPT UP—CHIEFLY BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE—IN A DESPERATE ENDEAVOR TO DISTRACT THEIR MINDS FROM THE TERRIBLE SITUATION. THERE WERE DANCES AND "STARVATION PARTIES" SO CALLED BECAUSE OF THE NECESSARILY LIMITED FARE PROVIDED, AND THE BOOMING OF THE GREAT SIEGE GUNS OFTEN SOUNDED ABOVE THE STRAINS OF A DREAMY WALTZ OR THE LIVELY BEAT OF A POLKA.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Garrick Theatre, New York, October 5, 1896.

General Nelson Randolph, commanding in Richmond..Mr. Joseph Brennan
Mrs. General Varney, wife of a Confederate officer of high rank .....Miss Ida Waterman
Edith Varney, her daughter.....Miss Amy Busby
Wilfred Varney, her youngest son.....Mr. Walter Thomas
Caroline Mitford, from across the street.....Miss Odette Tyler
Lewis Dumont, United States Secret Service—known in Richmond as Captain Thorne.....Mr. William Gillette
Henry Dumont, United States Secret Service—Lewis Dumont's brother .....Mr. M. L. Alsop
Mr. Benton Arrelsford, Confederate Secret Service.....Mr. Campbell Gollan
Miss Kittridge, sewing for the hospitals.....Miss Meta Brittain
Martha, negro house servant.....Miss Alice Leigh
Jonas, negro house servant.....Mr. H. D. James
Lieut. Maxwell, President's detail.....Mr. Francis Neilson
Lieut. Foray, first operator military telegraph lines.....Mr. William B. Smith
Lieut. Allison, second operator military telegraph lines....Mr. Louis Duval
Lieut. Tyree, artillery
Lieut. Ensing, artillery.
Sergeant Wilson.....Mr. I. N. Drew
Sergeant Ellington.....Mr. Henry Wilton
Corporal Matson.....Mr. H. A. Morey
Cavalry Orderly
Artillery Orderly
Hospital Messenger
First War Dept. Messenger
Second War Dept. Messenger
Third War Dept. Messenger
Fourth War Dept. Messenger
Telegraph Office Messenger A
Telegraph Office Messenger B
Eddinger

SECRET SERVICE

ACT I

The SCENE *is a drawing-room in* GENERAL VARNEY'S *House on Franklin Street in Richmond.*

EIGHT O'CLOCK.

A richly furnished room.—Southern characteristics.

Fireplace on the left side. A wide door or arch up L. or L. C. set diagonally, open to a front hall. The portières on this door or arch draw, completely closing the opening. A stairway is seen through this door or arch, in the hall, at the back, ascending from a landing a few steps high back of the center of the opening, and rising off to the left. Entrance to the front hall—which communicates with other parts of the house, or via front door to the street, is off L. below stairs. Entrance to the dining-room and kitchen off R. below stairs. Both of these openings are back of the wide door or arch up L. C.[1] *A wide door up C. opens to a back parlor which is being used for women who come there to sew and work for hospitals. In elaborate production, when the doors are opened, these women are seen in the room at the back, seated at tables working. Two double French windows on the right side, one up stage set oblique, and one down, both opening to a wide veranda. There is shrubbery beyond the veranda and vines on the balustrade and the posts of the veranda—which must be in the line of sight for the whole house outside the upper of these two windows. Both these windows are "French," extending down to the floor, and opening and closing on hinges. They also have curtains or draperies which can easily be drawn to cover them. Below the window down R. a writing desk and a chair. Between these windows stand a pedestal and a vase of flowers to be knocked over by* THORNE *in* ACT IV. *A chair near the pedestal. A chair and a cabinet R. of C. door against wall. Table up C. or trifle L. of C., on which is a lamp and vase of flowers. Couch down R. C. Small table and two chairs L. C. Chair each side of the fireplace at the left. Hall seat in the hall. Pedestal and statue on the landing in the hall. Dark or nearly dark outside the windows R. with moonlight effect. The lights are on in the hall outside the door up left and in the room up center but are not glaring. The light in the room itself is full on but is shaded so that it gives a subdued effect. No fire is in the fireplace. The portières on both windows closed at the rise. Windows are closed at the rise.*

[*At the rise of the curtain low distant boom of cannonading rolls in the distance and quiets down—then is heard again.*]

[MISS KITTRIDGE, *one of the women who are sewing for the hospitals, enters C. D. and comes down C. a little. She stops, listens to the sound of cannon with some anxiety,—and crosses to the window up R. and looks out. Flashes on her face. She turns and goes down toward the table at the left. She gathers up the pieces of cloth and linen rags that are on the table. Looks toward the window again. Then she takes the cloth off at the door up C., closing it carefully after her.*]

[*Sound of a heavy door closing outside up Left.*]

[*Enter at the door up L. C. from L.* WILFRED VARNEY, *a boy of about sixteen—impetuous—Southern—black-eyed—dark hair. He is fairly well dressed, but in a suit that has evidently been worn for some time, and of a dark shade. He comes rapidly into the room, looking about. Goes to the door which he opens a little way and looks off. Closes it, goes to window up R. Throws open the portières and windows and looks anxiously off. Red flashes on backing. Distant boom and low thunder of cannon.*]

[*Enter* MARTHA, *an old negro servant, through the door at the foot of the stairs.* WILFRED, *turning, sees her, and crosses toward her.*]

[1] Entrances and exits marked "Up L. C. to L." and "Up L. C. to R." indicate to front hall, or to door to dining room and back of house, respectively; and "Up L. C. from L." and "Up L. C. from R." indicate coming from front hall or from dining room, respectively.

WILFRED. Where's Mother?

MARTHA. She's up staars with Mars Howard sah.

WILFRED. I've got to see 'er!

MARTHA. Mars Howard he's putty bad dis ebenin'—I dunno's she'd want to leave 'im—I'll go up an' see what she says.

[*Exit door up L. and up the stairway.*]

[WILFRED, *left alone, moves restlessly about, especially when low rumble of distant cannon is heard. Effect of passing artillery in the street outside.—On hearing it he hurries to the window and looks out, continuing to do so while the sounds of the passing guns, horses and men are heard. While he is at the window* R., MRS. VARNEY *enters, coming down the stairway and on at door U. L. C. She is quiet, pale, with white or nearly white hair and a rather young face. Her dress is black and though rich, is plain. Not in the least "dressy" or fashionable.—In manner she is calm and self-possessed. She stops and looks at* WILFRED *a moment.—He turns and sees her.*—MARTHA *follows her down the stairway and exits door at foot of the stairway.*]

WILFRED. [*Goes toward* MRS. VARNEY.] Howard is n't worse is he?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Meeting* WILFRED *near* C.] I'm afraid so.

WILFRED. Anything I can do?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Shakes head*] No—no.—We can only wait—and hope. [WILFRED *walks away a little as if he could not quite say the thing on his mind*] I'm thankful there's a lull in the cannonading. Do they know why it stopped? [*Boom of cannon—a low distant rumble*]

WILFRED. [R. C.] It has n't stopped altogether—don't you hear?

MRS. VARNEY. [C.] Yes, but compared to what it was yesterday—you know it shook the house. Howard suffered dreadfully! [WILFRED *suddenly faces her*]

WILFRED. So did I, Mother! [*Slight pause*] [*Low boom of cannon*]

MRS. VARNEY. You!

WILFRED. When I hear those guns and know the fighting's on, it makes me——

MRS. VARNEY. [*Goes toward table* L. C. *Interrupting quickly*] Yes yes—we all suffered—we all suffered dear! [*Sits* R. *of table* L. C.]

WILFRED. Mother—you may not like it but you must listen—[*Going toward her*] —you must let me tell you how——

MRS. VARNEY. Wilfred! [*He stops speaking.—She takes his hand in hers tenderly.—A brief pause*] I know.

WILFRED. [*Low pleading voice*] But it's true Mother! I can't stay back here any longer! It's worse than being shot to pieces! I can't do it! [MRS. VARNEY *looks steadily into* WILFRED'S *face but says nothing. Soon she turns away a little as if she felt tears coming into her eyes*] Why don't you speak?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Turning to him. A faint attempt to smile*] I don't know what to say.

WILFRED. Say you won't mind if I go down there and help 'em!

MRS. VARNEY. It would n't be true!

WILFRED. I can't stay here!

MRS. VARNEY. You're so young!

WILFRED. No younger than Tom Kittridge —no younger than Ell Stuart—nor cousin Stephen—nor hundreds of the fellows fighting down there!— See Mother—they've called for all over eighteen—that was weeks ago! The seventeen call may be out any minute—the next one after that takes me! Do I want to stay back here till they *order* me out! I should think not! [*Walks about to* C. *Stops and speaks to* MRS. VARNEY] If I was hit with a shell an' *had* to stay it would be different! But I can't stand this—I can't do it Mother!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Rising and going to him*] I'll write to your Father.

WILFRED. Why that'll take forever! You don't know where his Division is—they change 'em every day! I can't wait for you to write.

MRS. VARNEY. [*Speaks finally*] I could n't let you go without his consent! You must be patient! [WILFRED *starts slowly across toward door* L. *with head lowered in disappointment,—but not ill-naturedly.* MRS. VARNEY *looks yearningly after him a moment as he moves away, then goes toward him*] Wilfred! [WILFRED *turns and meets her and she holds him and smooths his hair a little with her hand*] Don't feel bad that you have to stay here with your mother a little longer!

WILFRED. Aw—no——it is n't that!

MRS. VARNEY. Darling boy—I know it!

You want to fight for your country—and I'm proud of you! I want my sons to do their duty! But with your father commanding a brigade at the front and one boy lying wounded—perhaps mortally— [*Pause.*—MRS. VARNEY *turns and moves away a few steps toward* R.]

WILFRED. [*After pause—goes to her*] You will write to Father to-night—won't you?

MRS. VARNEY. Yes—yes! I'll write to him. [*Door bell is heard ringing in distant part of the house.*—WILFRED *and* MRS. VARNEY *both listen.*—MARTHA *enters up* L. C. *from* R. *and crosses outside door up* L. C. *on her way to the front door, going off up* L. *to* L.—*Heavy sound of door off up* L.—*In a moment she returns up* L. *from* L. *and stands in the wide doorway up* L. C.]

MARTHA. Hit's one o' de men fum de hossiple ma'am. [WILFRED *hurries to door up* L. *and exits to* L. *to see the messenger*]

MRS. VARNEY. We've just sent all the bandages we have Martha.

MARTHA. He says dey's all used up, an' two more trains juss come in crowded full o' wounded sojers—an' mos' all of 'em dreffful bad!

MRS. VARNEY. Is Miss Kittridge here yet?

MARTHA. Yass'm, she's yeah.

MRS. VARNEY. Ask her if they've got enough to send. Even if it's only a little let them have it. What they need most is bandages.

MARTHA. [*Crossing toward door up* C.] Yaas'm. [*Exits door up* C.—MRS. VARNEY *goes toward the door up* L. C. *Stops near the door and speaks a word to* MESSENGER *who is waiting at front door outside to* L. *to attract his attention—then beckons him*]

MRS. VARNEY. Oh— [*Beckoning*] Come in please! [*She moves toward* C.—MESSENGER *appears at the door up* L. C. *from* L. *He is a crippled soldier in battered Confederate uniform. His left arm is in a sling*] What hospital did you come from?

MESSENGER. [*Remains up near door up* L. C.] The Winder ma'am.

MRS. VARNEY. Have you been to St. Paul's? You know the ladies are working there to-night.

MESSENGER. Yes—but they hain't a-workin' for the hospitals, ma'am—they're a-making of sandbags for the fortifications.

MRS. VARNEY. I do hope we can give you something.

MESSENGER. Yes ma'am. [MISS KITTRIDGE *enters at door up* C. *bringing a small bundle of lint, etc.*—MRS. VARNEY *moves down and soon seats herself on couch down* R. C.]

MISS KITTRIDGE. This is all there is now. [*She hands the package to the* MESSENGER] If you'll come back in an hour we'll have more. [MESSENGER *takes package and exits at door up* L. C. *to* L.—*Sound of heavy door closing outside up* L.] We're all going to stay to-night, Mrs. Varney. There's so many more wounded come in it won't do to stop now.

MRS. VARNEY. [*On couch*] No no—we must n't stop.

MISS KITTRIDGE. [*Near* C.] Is—is your son—is there any change?

MRS. VARNEY. I'm afraid the fever's increasing.

MISS KITTRIDGE. Has the Surgeon seen him this evening?

MRS. VARNEY. No—oh no! [*Shaking her head*] We could n't ask him to come twice—with so many waiting for him at the hospital.

MISS KITTRIDGE. But they could n't refuse *you* Mrs. Varney!—There's that man going right back to the hospital! I'll call him and send word that—[*Starting toward the door up* L.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Rises*] No no—I can't let you!

[MISS KITTRIDGE *stops and turns to* MRS. VARNEY *in surprise*]

MISS KITTRIDGE. Not for—your own son?

MRS. VARNEY. Think how many own sons must be neglected to visit mine twice!

[*Sound of door outside up* L.—*Enter* EDITH VARNEY *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*a light quick entrance—coming from outside—hat in hand as if taking it off as she comes in*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Meeting* EDITH] Edith dear! How late you are! You must be tired to death!

EDITH. Oh no I'm not!—Besides, I have n't been at the hospital *all* day. Good-bye Miss Kittridge—I want to tell Mama something.

MISS KITTRIDGE. O dear! [*Turning up*] I'll get out of hearing right quick! [*Goes out at door up* C.]

EDITH. [*Up to door lightly and calling after* MISS KITTRIDGE] I hope you don't mind!

MISS KITTRIDGE. [*As she exits up* C.]

Mercy no—I should think not! [EDITH *closes the door and goes to* MRS. VARNEY *taking her down stage to chair* R. *of table* L. C.—MRS. VARNEY *sits in chair and* EDITH *on stool close to her on her* L., *in front of the table*]

EDITH. Mama—what do you think? What *do* you think?

MRS. VARNEY. What is it dear?

EDITH. I've been to see the President!

MRS. VARNEY. Mr. Davis!

EDITH. Um hm! [*Assent*] An' I asked him for an appointment for Captain Thorne on the War Department Telegraph Service—an' he gave it to me—a Special Commission Mama—appointing him to duty here in Richmond—a very important position—so now he won't have to be sent back to the front—an' it'll be doing his duty just the same!

MRS. VARNEY. But Edith—you don't——

EDITH. Yes it will, Mama! The President told me they needed a man who understood telegraphing and who was of high enough rank to take charge of the Service! And you know Cap'n Thorne is an expert! Since he's been here in Richmond he's helped 'em in the telegraph office over an' over again—Lieutenant Foray told me so! [MRS. VARNEY *slowly rises and moves away toward* C.—*After a slight pause*] Now Mama, you're going to scold an' behave dreadfully—an' you must n't—because it's all fixed—an' there's no trouble—an' the commission 'll be sent over here in a few minutes—just as soon as it can be made out! An' the next time he comes I'm to hand it to him myself! [*Turns* L. *and moves away a little beyond the table* L. C.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Moves back toward table* L. C.] He's coming this evening.

EDITH. [*Turns quickly at down* L. *and looks at* MRS. VARNEY *an instant before speaking—then in low voice*] How do you know?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Moving toward table* L. C.] This note came half an hour ago. [*Reaching toward the note to get it for* EDITH.—EDITH *however sees the note instantly, and impulsively snatches it and goes toward* R. *with it*]

EDITH. Has it been here—all this time? [*Takes note from the already opened envelope as she pauses near* C. *and eagerly glances at it*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*After a moment*] You see what he says—this 'll be his last call.—He's got his orders to leave. [*Sits* R. *of table* L. C.]

EDITH. [*Sitting on couch* R. C.] Why it's too ridiculous! Just as if the Commission from the President would n't supersede everything! It puts him at the head of the Telegraph Service! He'll be in the command of the Department!—He says—[*Glancing at note*] "good-by call" does he! All the better—it'll be that much more of a surprise. [*Rising and going toward* MRS. VARNEY] Now Mama, don't you breathe—I want to tell him myself!

MRS. VARNEY. But Edith dear—I don't quite approve of your going to the President about this.

EDITH. [*Changing from light manner to earnestness*] But listen, Mama—I could n't go to the War Department people—Mr. Arrelsford's there in one of the offices—and ever since I refused him you know how he's treated me!—[*Slight deprecatory motion from* MISS VARNEY] If I'd applied for the appointment there he'd have had it refused—and he'd have got them to order Cap'n Thorne away right off—I know he would—and—[*Stands motionless as she thinks of it*] That's where his orders to go came from!

MRS. VARNEY. But my dear——

EDITH. It is, Mama! [*Slight pause*] Is n't it lucky I got that commission today! [*Emphasis on "Is n't."—Crossing down* R.—*at* R. C. *near lounge*] [*Door bell rings in distant part of the house.*—JONAS *appears above door up* L. C. *from* R. *and goes off* L. *to front door.*—MRS. VARNEY *moves up stage a little waiting to see who it is.*—EDITH *listening.*—*Heavy sound of door closing outside up* L.—JONAS *enters at the door up* L. C. *from* L.]

JONAS. [*Coming down* R. *of* MRS. VARNEY] It's a officer, ma'am. He says he's fum de President—an'—[*Hands a card to* MRS. VARNEY] he's got ter see Miss Edith pussonully.

EDITH. [*Going up* C. *a little.—Low voice*] It's come, Mama!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Rises and goes up* C.] Ask the gentleman in. [JONAS *exits at door up* L. C. *to* L.—MRS. VARNEY *gives* EDITH *the card*]

EDITH. [*After a glance at the card*] Oh yes!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Do you know who it is?

EDITH. [*Low voice*] No! But he's from the President so it must be the Commission!

[*Enter* JONAS *at door up* L. C. *from* L. *He comes on a little way, bowing someone in*]

[*Enter* LIEUT. MAXWELL *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*He is a very dashing young officer, handsome, polite and dressed in a showy and perfectly fitting uniform.*—JONAS *exits at door up* L. C. *to* R.—MRS. VARNEY *advances a little*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. Good evening. [*Bowing*] [MRS. VARNEY *bows slightly.*—*To* MRS. VARNEY] Have I the honah of addressing Miss Varney?

MRS. VARNEY. [C.] I am Mrs. Varney, sir. [*Emphasizing "Mrs." a little*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [L. C.—*Bowing to* MRS. VARNEY] Madam—I'm very much afraid this looks like an intrusion on my part, but I come from the President and he desires me to see Miss Varney personally!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Inclining her head graciously*] Anyone from the President could not be otherwise than welcome.—This is my daughter. [*Indicating* EDITH *who is* R. C.]

(LIEUT. MAXWELL *bows to* EDITH *and she returns the salutation. He then walks across to her, taking a large brown envelope from his belt*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. Miss Varney, the President directed me to deliver this into your hands—with his compliments. [*Handing the envelope to* EDITH] He is glad to be able to do this not only at your request, but as a special favor to your father, General Varney.

EDITH. [*Taking envelope*] Oh thank you!

MRS. VARNEY. Won't you be seated, Lieutenant?

EDITH. [*In front*] O yes—do! [*Holds envelope pressed very tight against her side*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. Nothing would please me so much I assure you—but I'm compelled to be back at the President's house right away—I'm on duty this evening.—Would you mind writing me off a line or two Miss Varney—just to say you have the communication?

EDITH. Why certainly!—[*Takes a step or two toward desk at right*] You want a receipt—I—[*Stops hesitating—then turns and crosses toward door up* L.] I'll go upstairs to my desk—it won't take a minute! [*Turns at door*] And—could I put in how much I thank the President for his kindness?

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [C.] I'm very sure he'd be more than pleased! [EDITH *exits at door up* L. C. *and hastens up the stairway*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Moving forward slowly*] We have n't heard so much cannonading to-day, Lieutenant. Do they know what it means?

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Going forward with* MRS. VARNEY] I don't think they're quite positive ma'am, but they can't help lookin' for a violent attack to follow.

MRS. VARNEY. I don't see why it should quiet down before an assault!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Near* C.] It might be some signal, ma'am, or it might be they're moving their batteries to open on a special point. They're tryin' ev'ry way to break through our defenses—ev'ry way they know!

[*Door bell rings in distant part of house*]

MRS. VARNEY. It's very discouraging! [*Seats herself* R. *of table* L. C.] We can't seem to drive them back this time!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. No ma'am, but we're holding 'em where they are! They're no nearer now than they were six weeks ago, an' they'll never get in unless they do it by some scurvy trick—that's where the danger lies! [*Heavy sound of door outside up* L.]

[*Enter* EDITH *coming lightly and quickly down the stairway up* L.]

EDITH. [*Entering at door up* L. C. *from stairway, with a note in her hand, and without the official envelope, which she has left in her room*] Is Lieutenant Maxwell—[*Seeing him down stage with* MRS. VARNEY *and going across toward him*] O yes!

[LIEUT. MAXWELL *moves up* R. C. *meeting* EDITH]

[JONAS *enters at door up* L. C. *from* L. *as* EDITH *reaches* C., *showing in* CAPTAIN THORNE]

JONAS. [*As he enters and stands back for* THORNE *to pass*] Will you jess kinely step dis way suh!

[MRS. VARNEY *rises and moves down in front of and then up* L. *of table.*—MAXWELL *meets* EDITH *up* R. C.]

EDITH. [*Meeting* MAXWELL *up* R. C.] I did n't know but you—[*She stops—hearing* JONAS *up* L.—*and quickly turns, looking off* L.] Oh!—Captain Thorne!

[*Enter* CAPTAIN THORNE *at door up* L. C. *from* L., *meeting and shaking hands with* EDITH *up* L. C.—THORNE *wears the uniform of a Confederate Captain of Artillery. It is somewhat worn and soiled.* LIEUT. MAXWELL *turned and moved up a little on* EDITH'S *entrance, remaining a little* R. *of* C.—JONAS *exits door up* L. C. *to* R.]

EDITH. [*Up* L. C.—*Giving* THORNE *her hand briefly*] We were expecting you!—Here 's Captain Thorne, mama!

[MRS. VARNEY *moves up* L. C. *meeting* THORNE *and shaking hands with him graciously.*—EDITH *turns away and goes to* LIEUT. MAXWELL *up* R. C.—THORNE *and* MRS. VARNEY *move up* C. *near small table and converse*]

EDITH. [R. C.] I was n't so very long writing it, was I Lieutenant? [*She hands* LIEUT. MAXWELL *the note*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [R. C.] I 've never seen a quicker piece of work, Miss Varney. [*Putting the note in belt or pocket*] When you want a clerkship ovah at the Government offices you must shorely let me know!

EDITH. [*Smilingly*] You 'd better not commit yourself—I might take you at your word!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. Nothing would please me so much I 'm sure! All you 've got to do is just to apply!

EDITH. Lots of the girls are doing it—they have to, to live! Are n't there a good many where you are?

LIEUT. MAXWELL. Well we don't have so many as they do over at the Treasury. I believe there are more ladies there than men!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Comes down a little*] Perhaps you gentlemen have met!—[*Glancing toward* LIEUT. MAXWELL *and back to* THORNE]

[THORNE *shakes head a little and takes a step forward* L. C. *facing* MAXWELL]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Introducing*] Cap'n Thorne—Lieutenant Maxwell.

THORNE. [*Slight inclination of head*] Lieutenant.

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Returning bow pleasantly*] I have n't had that pleasure—though I 've heard the Cap'n's name mentioned several times!

THORNE. Yes? [MRS. VARNEY *and* EDITH *are looking at* MAXWELL]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*As if it were rather amusing*] In fact, Cap'n, there 's a gentleman in one of our offices who seems mighty anxious to pick a fight with you!

[EDITH *is suddenly serious and a look of apprehension spreads over* MRS. VARNEY'S *face*]

THORNE. [*Easily*] Pick a fight! Really! Why what office is that, Lieutenant?

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Slightly annoyed*] The War Office, sir!

THORNE. Oh dear! I did n't suppose you had anybody in the *War* Office who wanted to fight!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Almost angry*] An' why not, sir?

THORNE. [*Easily*] Well he 'd hardly be in an office would he—at a time like this?

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Trying to be light again*] I 'd better not tell him that, Cap'n—he 'd certainly insist on havin' you out!

THORNE. [*Moving down* L. C. *with* MRS. VARNEY] That would be too bad—to interfere with the gentleman's office hours! [THORNE *and* MRS. VARNEY *move down* L. C. *near table—in conversation*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*To* EDITH] He does n't believe it Miss Varney,—but it 's certainly true, an' I dare say you know who the——

EDITH. [*Quickly interrupting* MAXWELL—*low voice*] Please don't Lieutenant!—I—[*An apprehensive glance toward* THORNE] I 'd rather not—[*With a slight catch of breath*]—talk about it!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*After short pause of surprise*] Yes, of course!—I did n't know there was any——

EDITH. [*Interrupting again, with attempt to turn it off*] Yes! [*A rather nervous effort to laugh lightly*]—You know there 's always the weather to fall back on!

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Picking it up easily*] Yes—an' mighty bad weather too—most of the time!

EDITH. [*Laughingly*] Yes—is n't it! [*They laugh a little and go on talking and laughing to themselves, moving toward* R. *upper window for a moment and soon move across toward door up* L. *as if* MAXWELL *were going*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Back of table* L. C., R. *of* THORNE] From your note Captain

Thorne, I suppose you're leaving us soon. Your orders have come.

THORNE. [*Back of table* L.C.—L. *of* MRS. VARNEY] Yes—Mrs. Varney, they have. —I'm very much afraid this 'll be my last call.

MRS. VARNEY. Is n't it rather sudden? It seems to me they ought to give you a little time.

THORNE. [*Slight smile*] We have to be ready for anything you know!

MRS. VARNEY. [*With a sigh*] Yes—I know!—It's been a great pleasure to have you drop in on us while you were here. We shall quite miss your visits.

THORNE. [*A slight formality in manner*] Thank you Mrs. Varney—I shall never forget what they've been to me.

[MAXWELL *is taking leave of* EDITH *up* C.]

EDITH. [*Up* C.] Lieutenant Maxwell is going, Mama!

MRS. VARNEY. So soon! Excuse me a moment, Captain! [*Goes hurriedly toward* MAXWELL.—THORNE *goes down* L. *of table* L. C. *near mantel*] I'm right sorry to have you hurry away, Lieutenant. We shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you again. [R. *of* MAXWELL]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. I shall certainly call, Mrs. Varney—if you 'll allow me.—[*Crosses toward door*]—Cap'n! [*Saluting* THORNE *from near door up* L.]

THORNE. [*Turning from mantel. Half salute*] Lieutenant!

MAXWELL. Miss Varney! Mrs. Varney! [*Bowing to each. Exits door up* L. C. *to* L.—MRS. VARNEY *follows* MAXWELL *off at door up* L. C. *to* L. *speaking as she goes*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*As she goes off with* MAXWELL] Now remember Lieutenant, you're to come sometime when duty does n't call you away so soon!

[EDITH *turns and moves slowly to table up* C. *on* MAXWELL'S *exit*]

LIEUT. MAXWELL. [*Outside.—Voice getting more distant*] Trust me to attend to that, Mrs. Varney!

[*Sound of heavy door closing off up* L.]

THORNE. [*Moving toward* EDITH *who is up* C. *at small table*] Shall I see Mrs. Varney again?

EDITH. [*Getting a rose from vase on table up* C.] Oh yes—you 'll see her again!

THORNE. [*At the little table up* L. C. *near* EDITH—*on her left*] I have n't long to stay.

EDITH. Oh—not long!

THORNE. No—I'm sorry to say.

EDITH. [*Moving slowly down* L. C.] Well —do you know—I think you have more time than you really think you have! It would be odd if it turned out that way—would n't it? [*Playing with the flower in her hand*]

THORNE. [*Who moves down* L. C *as* EDITH *does*] Yes—but it won't turn out that way.

EDITH. Yes—but you—[*She stops as* THORNE *is taking the rose from her hand —which she was holding up in an absent way as she talked.*—THORNE *at the same time holds the hand she had it in. She lets go of the rose and draws away her hand*]

[*Slight pause*]

EDITH. [*A little embarrassed*] You know —you can sit down if you want to! [*Indicating chair at* L. *of table*]

THORNE. [*Smiles a little*] Yes—I see. [*He has the rose*]

EDITH. [*Sits* R. *of table* L. C.] You'd better!—I have a great many things to say!

THORNE. Oh—you have!

EDITH. [*Nodding.—Her left hand is on the table*] Yes.

THORNE. I have only one.

EDITH. [*Looking up at him*] And—that is——?

THORNE. [*Leaning toward her over table, and covering her hand with his*] Goodbye.

EDITH. But I don't really think you 'll have to say it!

THORNE. [*Earnestly—looking down into her eyes*] I know I will!

EDITH. [*Low voice—more serious*] Then it 'll be because you want to!

THORNE. [*Quickly*] Oh no! It will be —because I must.

EDITH. [*Rising slowly and looking at him a little mischievously as she does so*] Oh—because you must! [THORNE *nods a little—saying "yes" with his lips.*—EDITH *walks toward* C. *thinking how to tell him.—He watches her.—She suddenly turns back and goes again to table* L. C.] You don't know some things I do! [*She sits in chair* R. *of table*]

THORNE. [*Laughing a little first*] I think that 's more than likely Miss Varney! [*Moves to* L. *of table and seats himself in chair facing* EDITH] Would you mind telling me a few so I can somewhat approach you in that respect?

EDITH. [*Seriously*] I would n't mind

telling you one, and that is, it's very wrong for you to think of leaving Richmond yet!

THORNE. Ah—but you don't——

EDITH. [*Breaking quickly in*] Oh yes I do!

THORNE. [*Looking up at her amused*] Well—what?

EDITH. Whatever you were going to say! Most likely it was that there's something or other I don't know about!—But I know this—[*Looking away front—eyes lowered a little*] you were sent here only a few weeks ago to recover from a very bad wound—[THORNE *looks down and a little front quickly*]—and you haven't nearly had time for it yet!

THORNE. [*As if amused*] Ha ha—yes. [*Looking up at* EDITH *with usual expression*] I do look as if the next gentle breeze would blow me away, don't I?

EDITH. [*Turning to him earnestly—half rising*] No matter how you look, you ought not—Oh—[*Rising fully and turning away from him*] You're just making fun of it like you always do! [*Goes up* C. *a little.—Turns to* THORNE *again a little up* C.] No matter! You can make all the fun you like, but the whole thing is settled and you aren't going away at all!

[THORNE *has risen with* EDITH *and stands near table* L. C. *watching her smilingly—his hat in left hand*]

THORNE. Oh—I'm *not!*

EDITH. No—you're *not!* Doesn't that surprise you?

THORNE. Well rather! [*Puts hat on table and moves up near* EDITH *going back of table*] Now you've gone into the prophesying business perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me what I am going to do?

EDITH. [*Up* C. *a little. Turning to him*] I wouldn't mind at all—an' it's this—you see I've been to the—[*Hesitates*] Now! I'm almost afraid to tell you!

THORNE. [*Near* EDITH—*left of her*] Don't tell me Miss Varney—because it's true that my orders have come—I'm leaving tonight.

[EDITH *looks at* THORNE *an instant—then turns and goes* R. C. *and sits on couch. Turns and looks at him from there*]

EDITH. [*After looking at* THORNE *an instant*] Where—to the front?

THORNE. [*Moving easily across to the couch where* EDITH *sits*] Well—[*Little laugh*] you see we—[*Sits on couch* R. C. *near* EDITH] we can't always tell where orders will take us Miss Varney.

EDITH. But listen! Supposing there were other orders—from a higher authority—appointing you to duty here?

THORNE. [*Eyes lowered before him*] It wouldn't make any difference.

EDITH. [*Sudden alarm*] You don't—you don't mean you'd go—in spite of them? [THORNE *raises his eyes to hers in slight surprise and looks at her an instant. Then he nods affirmatively*] But if it proved your first order was a mistake—and—[*In her earnestness she makes a little motion with her left hand within his reach*]

THORNE. [*Catching her hand and holding it close in both of his*] My first order isn't a mistake Miss Varney.—I—I don't suppose I shall ever see you—[*He stops suddenly—then rises quickly and moves up* R. C. *a little, standing faced up toward window*]

[*After watching* THORNE *until he is motionless* EDITH *rises and crosses up* C. *to* L. *of him*]

EDITH. [*Up* C.—*With a new apprehension*] Is it—is it something dangerous?

THORNE. [*Turning to* EDITH *and speaking lightly*] Well I hope so—enough to make it interesting!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Don't be angry if I ask you again about your orders—I—Oh I must know!

THORNE. Why?

EDITH. Tell me!—Please tell me!

THORNE. I can't do that Miss Varney.

EDITH. You needn't! I know! [THORNE *very slight apprehensive glance to down* L. *but instantly back to her*] They're sending you on some mission where death is almost certain! They'll sacrifice your life because they know you are fearless and will do *anything!* There's a chance for you to stay here in Richmond and be just as much use—and I'm going to ask you to do this! It isn't *your* life alone—there are other lives to think of—that's why I ask you!—It may not sound well—but—you see——

THORNE. [*Catching her hands passionately*] Ah my dear one—my dear—my darling—how can I——[*Suddenly stops. Recovers control of himself*] No! [*Head turned slightly away*] You shan't have this against me too!

EDITH. Oh no! No! I could never have

anything against you!—What do you mean?

THORNE. [*Holding her hands close*] I mean that I must go—my business is elsewhere—I ought never to have seen you or spoken to you—but I had to come to this house—and you were here—and now it's only you in the—[*Stops. Releases her hands. Turns blindly* R. *Then turns* L. *starting toward door up* L. C.] Your mother—I'll say good-bye to her!

EDITH. [*Stepping quickly in his way*] No!—You must listen! [THORNE *stops before her near* C.] They need you here in Richmond more than anywhere else—the President told me so himself!—Your orders are to stay! You are given a Special Commission on the War Department Telegraph service, and you——

THORNE. [*Quickly, decisively, but in subdued voice*] No no! I won't take it! I could n't take it Miss Varney!

EDITH. You 'll do that much for me!

THORNE. [*Seizing her hands again*] It 's for you that I 'll do nothing of the kind! If you ever think of me again remember that I refused it!

EDITH. [*Breaking into* THORNE'S *last few words*] You can't refuse! It 's the President's request—it 's his order! [*Breaking away from him and going toward door up* L. C.] Please wait a minute! I left it upstairs and you 'll see for yourself that——

THORNE. Don't get it Miss Varney! [*Following her*] I won't look at it!

EDITH. [*Stops and turns*] But I want you to see what it is! It puts you at the head of everything! You have entire control! When you see it I know you 'll accept! Please wait! [EDITH *exits at door up* L. C. *and runs lightly up the stairway*]

THORNE. [*Following her up toward stairway*] Miss Varney—I can't——

EDITH. [*As she goes*] Oh yes you can!

[THORNE *stands looking up the stairway after* EDITH *for an instant. Then turns and hurries down to the table at* L. C. *and seizing his hat and the rose starts rapidly up towards door up* L. C. *as if to go.—As* THORNE *starts down for hat sound of heavy door closing outside up* L.]

[*Enter at door up* L. C. *from* L. CAROLINE MITFORD, *skipping in lightly, and crossing in front of* THORNE—*who has stepped up out of the way.—She is breathless from having run across the street.—Her dress is made of her great grandmother's wedding gown—as light and pretty as possible—with a touch of the old-fashioned in cut and pattern. She is very young and charming*]

CAROLINE. [*Comes quickly on to* C. *Stops abruptly*] Oh!—Cap'n Thorne!

THORNE. [*Saluting mechanically*] Miss Mitford! [*Turns and looks up the stairway again*]

CAROLINE. [*Saluting*] Yes of co'se—I forgot!—How lucky this is! You 're just the very person I wanted to see! [*Going toward couch at* R. C.] I 'll tell you all about it in just a minute! Goodness me! [*Sits on couch*] I 'm all out o' breath—just runnin' ovah from our house! [*Devotes herself to breathing for a moment*]

THORNE. [*Going quickly down to* CAROLINE *at* R. C.] Miss Mitford—would you do something for me!

CAROLINE. Why of co'se I would!

THORNE. [*Rapidly*] Thank you very much!—Tell Miss Varney when she comes down—Just say good-night for me and tell her I 've gone!

CAROLINE. [*Pretending astonishment*] Why I would n't do such a thing for the wide wide world! It would be a wicked dreadful lie—because you *won't* be gone!

THORNE. Well I 'm sorry you look at it that way.—Good-night Miss Mitford! [*Turns to go*]

CAROLINE. [*Jumping to her feet and running round on his left between him and the door*] No no!—You don't seem to understand! I 've got something to say to you!

THORNE. [*Hurriedly*] Yes—I understand that all right—but some other time! [*Trying to pass* CAROLINE]

CAROLINE. [*Detaining him*] No no no!—Wait! [THORNE *stops*] There is n't any other time! It 's to-night!—We 're going to have a Starvation Party!

THORNE. Good heavens—another of those things!

CAROLINE. Yes we are! It 's goin' to be ovah at mah house this time! Now we 'll expect you in half an hour. [*Her finger up to emphasize the time*]

THORNE. Thank you very much Miss Mitford, but I can't come! [*Indicating off* L.] I 've got to be—

CAROLINE. [*Interrupting*] N—n—n—[*Until she quiets him*] Now that

would n't do at all! You went to Mamie Jones's! Would you treat me like that?

THORNE. Mamie Jones—that was last week Thursday—[CAROLINE *trying to stop him with "now now—now!" etc.*] and her mother—[CAROLINE *louder with "now—now!"*—THORNE *raises his voice above the din*] Her mother——

[*As* CAROLINE *is still going on he gives it up and turns front in despair*]

CAROLINE. [*When quiet has come.—Very distinctly*] Now there is n't any use o' talkin'!

THORNE. Yes I see that!

CAROLINE. Did n't you promise to obey when I gave orders? Well these are orders!

THORNE. [*Turning to her for a last attempt*] Yes, but this time——

CAROLINE. This time is just the same as all the other times only *worse!* [*Turns away and goes to back of table* L. C. *and picks up something from table*]

[THORNE *turns and goes a little way toward up* R. C. *as if discouraged*]

CAROLINE. [*Without turning*] Besides that, she expects it.

[THORNE *turns and looks across at* CAROLINE]

THORNE. What did you say?

CAROLINE. [*At table* L. C.—*Smelling a flower daintily. Facing front*] I say she expects it—that 's all!

THORNE. Who do you mean? [*Moves toward her to* C. *enquiringly*]

CAROLINE. [*Turns and looks at him*] Who?

THORNE. [*Assent*] Um hm!

CAROLINE. [*Innocently*] Who expects you?

THORNE. [*Assent again*] Ah ha!

CAROLINE. Why Edith of co'se! Who did you s'pose I was talkin' about all this time?

THORNE. You mean—you mean she expects me to—[*Slight motion of hand toward door up* L. C.]

CAROLINE. Why of co'se she does!—Just to take her ovah that 's all!—Goodness me—you need n't *stay* if you don't want to! Now I'll go an' tell her you 're waiting—that 's what I'll do! [*Starts up toward door up* L. C.—*Stops and turns*] You won't go now? [*Emphasize "go"*]

THORNE. [*Hesitating*] Well—e—I—I—— If she expects it Miss Mitford [*Moving up toward* CAROLINE] I'll wait an' take her over—but I can't stay at your party a minute!

CAROLINE. I *thought* you 'd come to your senses some time or other!—You don't seem to quite realize what you 've got to do!—See here, Mr. Captain—[*Taking hold of the left sleeve of his coat and bringing him down* C. *a little way*] Was she most ready?

THORNE. Well—e—how do I—how—

CAROLINE. What dress did she have on?

THORNE. Dress?—Why I hardly——

CAROLINE. Oh you *men!* Why she 's only got two!

THORNE. [*Relieved*] Yes—well then very likely this was one of them, Miss Mitford!

CAROLINE. [*Starting up toward door up* L. C.] Oh, no mattah—I 'm going up anyhow! [THORNE *moves up* C. *as* CAROLINE *goes up* L. C.—CAROLINE *stops up* L. C. *near door and turns back to* THORNE] Cap'n Thorne—you can wait out there on the veranda! [*Pointing to window up* R.]

THORNE. [*Glances where she points—then to her*] Yes of course—but if I wait right here I can see her when she——

CAROLINE. [*Majestically*] Those are orders! [THORNE *looks at her an instant—then salutes and wheels about making complete military turn to* R. *and marches toward the window at up* R.—CAROLINE *is watching him admiringly. Speaks as* THORNE *reaches up* R. C.] It 's cooler outside you know!

THORNE. [*Turning to her at up* R. C. *and standing in stiff military attitude*] Pardon me Miss Mitford—orders never have to be explained!

CAROLINE. That 's right!—I take back the explanation! [*Taking one step to her* R. *as she gives an odd little salute*]

THORNE. [*With deferential salute in slight imitation of hers—but with step to his left*] That 's right Miss Mitford—take it back! [*Turns and is reaching to pull aside curtains of window up* R. *with right hand*]

CAROLINE. And—oh yes—Cap'n!

[THORNE *turns to her again questioningly—right hand still holding curtain behind him*]

CAROLINE. [*A peremptory order*] Smoke!

[*For an instant* THORNE *does not understand. Then he sees it and relapses at once into easy manner, stepping forward a little and feeling with right hand in breast of coat*

front for cigar—turning somewhat to front]

THORNE. [*As above*] Oh—ha ha—[*Smiling*] you mean one of those Nashville sto—

CAROLINE. Silence sir! [THORNE *looks at her quickly*] Orders never have to be explained!

THORNE. [*With salute*] Right again Miss Mitford—orders never have to be explained! [*Salutes, turns and goes off at window up* R.]

CAROLINE. [*Looks admiringly after* THORNE] He's splendid! If Wilfred was only like that! [*Moves down* C. *slowly, thinking it over*] But then—our engagement's broken off anyhow so what's the diff!—Only—if he was like that I'd—no! I don't think I would either! [*Shakes her head*] No!—Still—I must say it would make a heap of difference! An' then if he was like that——[*In same tone—seeing* MRS. VARNEY *close to her*] Why how dy do!

[MRS. VARNEY *has entered on earlier cue, at door up* L. C. *from* L., *and noticing* CAROLINE *has come down to her on her left*]

MRS. VARNEY. Why Caroline dear, what are you talking about all to yourself?

CAROLINE. [*Confused*] Oh—just—I was just saying you know—that—why I don't know—I don't really know what I was goin' to—e—Do you think it's goin' to rain?

MRS. VARNEY. Dear me, child—I haven't thought about it!—Why what have you got on? Is that a new dress?

CAROLINE. New *dress!* Well I should think it was—I mean *is!* These are my great grandmother's mother's weddin' clothes! Are n't they just the most beaufleist you ever saw! Just in the nick of time too! I was on my very last rags, an' I did n't know what to do—an' Mama gave me a key and told me to look in an old horsehair trunk in the attic—an' I did—and these were in it! [*Takes a dance step or two, holding skirt out*] Just in time for the Starvation party to-night! Ran ovah to show it to Edith—where is she?

MRS. VARNEY. She won't be over to-night, I'm afraid. [*Crosses to* R. C.]

CAROLINE. [C.] Oh yes she will!

MRS. VARNEY. But I've just come down dear!

CAROLINE. Yes but I'm just going *up* dear! [*Turns and runs off at door up* L. C. *and up the stairway, disappearing at the upper landing.*—MRS. VARNEY *alone a moment. After a little she moves forward in thought. Then turns to desk* R. *and prepares to write a letter. Suddenly* CAROLINE *races down the stairs again and runs lightly on at door up* L. C.—MRS. VARNEY *looks up surprised.*—CAROLINE *hurries across toward window up* R. *as if going out*] You see Caroline, it was no use!

CAROLINE. [*Turning*] No *use!* [*Comes down in front of couch near* MRS. VARNEY]

MRS. VARNEY. [*At desk* R.] Why you don't mean—in this short time——

CAROLINE. Goodness me! I did n't stop to argue with her—I just *told* her!

MRS. VARNEY. Told her what, child!

CAROLINE. Why—that Cap'n Thorne was waitin' for her out yere on the v'randah!

MRS. VARNEY. But she is n't going is she?

CAROLINE. Well, I would n't like to say for sure—[*Moving nearer* MRS. VARNEY *and in lower voice*] but you just watch which dress she has on when she comes down! Now I'll go out there an' tell him she'll be down in a minute—then the whole thing's finished up all round! [*Turns* L. *and goes around couch and up toward window up* R. *speaking as she goes*] I have more work getting people fixed up so they can come to my party than it would take to run a blockade into Savannah every fifteen minutes! [*She runs lightly off at window up* R.]

[MRS. VARNEY *looks after* CAROLINE *with a smile and then taking some paper and envelopes in her hand, rises and moves as if to go to door up* L.—*Enter* WILFRED *at door up* L. C. *from* L. *coming in as though he wished to avoid being seen, and looking off up the stairway as he enters. He carries a large bundle stuffed loosely under his coat, which is done up in a paper. He turns quickly seeing* MRS. VARNEY *and makes a very slight movement as if to better conceal the package he carries. Stands looking at her*]

MRS. VARNEY. What have you got there Wilfred?

WILFRED. Here?

MRS. VARNEY. Yes—under your coat.

WILFRED. Oh—this! [*Tapping the place where his coat protrudes*] Why it's only a—that is, it's one of the—e—Have you written that letter yet?

MRS. VARNEY. No dear, I've been too busy. But I'm going to do it right now. [MRS. VARNEY *goes across to door up* L. C.—*Near the door she glances round a little anxiously at* WILFRED.—WILFRED *is looking at her.—Then she turns and exits at door up* L. C. *and goes up the stairway*]

[WILFRED *turns away after she has gone. Glances round room. Goes to table down* L. C. *and begins to undo the package cautiously. He has hardly more than loosened the paper when* CAROLINE *appears at window up* R.]

CAROLINE. [*Speaking off at window up* R.] Those are orders Cap'n—an' orders never have to be explained!

[WILFRED *hurriedly stuffs the loosened bundle inside his coat again*]

THORNE. [*Outside the window up* R.] Right you are Miss Mitford! I'll see that they're carried out!

[CAROLINE *enters through window up* R. *closing it after her, but does not close the portières.*—WILFRED *is about to start toward down* L.—CAROLINE *turning from window* R. *sees* WILFRED.—*Both stand an instant*]

CAROLINE. [*After the pause*] Good evening Mr. Varney! [*Emphasize "Mr. Varney"*]

WILFRED. [*Coldly*] Good evening Miss Mitford! [*Emphasize "Miss Mitford"*] [*Both now start rapidly toward door up* L. C., *but as it brings them toward each other they stop simultaneously up* L. *in order to avoid meeting in the doorway*]

CAROLINE. Excuse me—I'm in a *great* hurry!

WILFRED. That's plain enough! [*Looks at her*] Another party I reckon! [*"Party" with contemptuous emphasis*]

CAROLINE. You reckon perfectly correct—it *is* another party! [*Turns and moves slowly down toward* C.]

WILFRED. Dancing! [*Moves down* L. C.]

CAROLINE. Well—what of it! What's the matter with dancing I'd like to know!

WILFRED. [L. C.] Nothing's the matter with it—if you want to *do* it! [*Stands looking away to down* L.]

CAROLINE. Well I want to *do* it fast enough if that's all you mean! [*Turns away a little toward* R.]

WILFRED. [*An emphatic turn toward her*] But I must say it's a pretty way to carry on—with the sound of the cannon not six miles away!

[WILFRED *is dead in earnest not only in this scene but throughout the entire performance. To give the faintest idea that he thinks there is anything humorous about his lines or behavior would be inexcusable*]

CAROLINE. [*Turning back to him*] Well what do you want us to do—sit down and cry about it?—A heap o' good *that* would do now would n't it?

WILFRED. Oh—I have n't time to talk about it! [*Turns up as if to go*]

CAROLINE. Well it was you who started *out* to talk about it—I 'm right sure *I* did n't!

[WILFRED *stops dead on* CAROLINE'S *speech, and after a quick glance to see that no one is near, goes down to her*]

WILFRED. You need n't try to fool me! I know well enough how you 've been carrying on since our engagement was broken off! Half a dozen officers proposing to you—a dozen for all I know!

CAROLINE. What difference does it make? I have n't got to *marry* 'em have I?

WILFRED. [L. C.] Well—[*Twist of head*] it is n't very nice to go on like that I must say—proposals by the wholesale! [*Turning away*]

CAROLINE. [C.] Goodness gracious—what 's the use of talking to me about it? *They 're* the ones that propose—*I* don't!

WILFRED. [*Turning on her* L. C.] Well what do you let 'em *do* it for?

CAROLINE. [C.] How can I help it?

WILFRED. Ho! [*Sneer*] Any girl can help it!—You helped it with *me* all right!

CAROLINE. Well—[*An odd little glance to floor in front*] that was different!

WILFRED. And ever since you threw me ovah—

CAROLINE. [*Looking up at him indignantly*] Oh!—I *did n't* throw you ovah—you just *went* ovah! [*Turns away to* R. *a little*]

WILFRED. Well I went over because you walked off alone with Major Sillsby that night we were at Drury's Bluff an' encouraged him to propose—[CAROLINE *looks round in wrath*] Yes—[*Advancing to* C.] *encouraged* him!

CAROLINE. [R. C.] Of *co'se* I did! I did n't want 'im hangin' round forever did I? That 's the on'y way to finish 'em off!

WILFRED. [C.] You want to finish too many of 'em off! Nearly every officer in the 17th Virginyah, I 'll be sworn!

CAROLINE. Well what do you want me to do—string a placard round my neck saying "No proposals received here—apply at the office!" Would that make you feel any better?

WILFRED. [*Throwing it off with pretended carelessness*] Oh—it does n't make any difference to me what you do! [*Turns away*]

CAROLINE. Well if it does n't make any difference to you, it does n't even make as much as that to me! [*Turns and goes to couch at* R. C. *and sits on left end of it*]

WILFRED. [*Turning on her again*] Oh—it does n't! I think it *does* though!—You looked as if you enjoyed it pretty well while the 3rd Virginyah was in the city!

CAROLINE. [*Jumping to her feet*] Enjoyed it! I should think I did! I just love every one of 'em! They 're on their way to the front! They 're going to fight for us—an'—an' die for us—an' I *love* 'em! [*Turns front*]

WILFRED. Well why don't you accept one of 'em an' done with it!

CAROLINE. How do you know but what I 'm going to?

WILFRED. [*Goes toward her a little*] I suppose it 'll be one of those *smart* young fellows with a cavalry uniform!

CAROLINE. It 'll be *some* kind of a uniform—I can tell you that! It won't be anybody that stays here in Richmond—

WILFRED. [*Unable for a few seconds to say anything. Looks about room helplessly. Then speaks in low voice*] Now I see what it was! I had to stay in Richmond—an' so you—an' so——

CAROLINE. [*In front of couch* R. C.] Well—[*Looking down—playing with something with her foot*] that made a heap o' difference! [*Looks up.—Different tone*] Why I was the on'y girl on Franklin Street that did n't have a—a—[*Hesitates*] —someone she was engaged to at the front! The on'y one! Just *think* what it was to be out of it like that! [WILFRED *simply looks at her*] Why you 've no idea what I suffered! Besides, it 's our—it 's our *duty* to help all we can!

WILFRED. [*Looking up toward front*] Help! [*Thinking of the trousers under his coat*]

CAROLINE. Yes—help! There are n't many things we girls can do—I know that well enough! But Colonel Woodbridge—he 's one o' Morgan's men you know—well he told Mollie Pickens that the boys fight *twice* as well when they have a—a sweetheart at home! [WILFRED *glances quickly about as he thinks*]

WILFRED. He said *that* did he!

CAROLINE. Yes—an' if we can make 'em fight twice as well why we just ought to do it—that 's all! We girls can't do much but we can do *something!*

WILFRED. [*Short pause.—He makes an absent-minded motion of feeling of the package under his arm*] You 're in earnest are you?

CAROLINE. Earnest!

WILFRED. You really want to help—all you can!

CAROLINE. Well I should think I *did!*

WILFRED. Yes—but do you *now?*

CAROLINE. Of co'se—that 's what I say!

WILFRED. An' if I was—[*Glances around cautiously*]—if I was going to join the army—would you help *me?*

CAROLINE. [*Looking front and down.—Slight embarrassment*] Why of co'se I would—if it was anything I could do! [*Emphasize "do" slightly*]

WILFRED. [*Earnestly—quite near her*] Oh it 's something you can *do* all right!

CAROLINE. [R. C.—*Hardly daring to look up*] What is it?

WILFRED. [*Unrolling a pair of old gray army trousers taking them from under his coat so that they unfurl before her on cue*] Cut these off! [*Short pause.—*CAROLINE *looking at trousers.—*WILFRED *looking at her.* WILFRED *soon goes on very earnestly, holding trousers before his own legs to measure*] They 're about twice too long! All you got to do is to cut 'em off about there, an' sew up the ends so they won't ravel out!

CAROLINE. [R. C.—*The idea beginning to dawn on her*] Why they 're for the Army! [*Taking trousers and hugging them to her—legs hanging down*]

WILFRED. [C.] Sh!—Don't speak so loud for heaven's sake! [*A glance back as if afraid of being overheard*] I 've got a jacket here too! [*Shows her a small army coat*] Nearly a fit—came from the hospital—Johnny Seldon wore it—he won't want it any more you know—— an' he was just about my size!

CAROLINE. [R. C.—*Low voice*] No—he won't want it any more. [*Stands thinking*]

WILFRED. [C.—*After a slight pause*] Well!—What is it!—I thought you said you wanted to help!

CAROLINE. [*Quickly*] Oh yes—I do! I do!

WILFRED. Well go on—what are you waiting for?

CAROLINE. [R. C. *near end of couch*] Yes! Yes! [*Hurriedly drops on knees on floor and takes hold, spreading trousers out exactly and patting them smooth*] This is the place is n't it? [*Pointing to near the knees*]

WILFRED. No—not up there—Here! [*Indicating about five inches from the bottom of the trouser leg*]

CAROLINE. Oh yes—I see! [*Hurriedly snatches pins from her dress. Puts one in mouth and one in place* WILFRED *indicates. All very rapid and earnest. Takes hold of other leg of trousers. Speaking as if pin in mouth. Innocently—and without looking up*] The other one just the same? [*A musical rise to voice at end of this.*—WILFRED *does not deign to reply.*—CAROLINE *hearing nothing looks up at him*] Oh yes, o' co'se! [*She quickly puts pin in other leg of trousers*]

[*From this time on* CAROLINE'S *demeanor toward* WILFRED *is entirely changed. It is because he is going to join the army*]

[CAROLINE *on floor with trousers and coat takes hold of the work with enthusiasm—very busy—pins—etc.—etc.*] Do you see any scissors around anywhere! [WILFRED *dashes about looking on tables, after throwing jacket on end of couch* R. C.] This won't never tear—[*Trying to tear off the trousers' leg*]—for all I can do!

WILFRED. [*First looking on table down* L. C. *and picking up the paper jacket was wrapped in. Getting a work-basket from table up* C. *and quickly bringing it*] There must be some in here! [*Hands the scissors out of the basket to* CAROLINE.—*As she reaches up from her position on the floor to take them, she looks in* WILFRED'S *face an instant—then quickly down to work again. Then she works with head down.*—WILFRED *leaves wrapping paper up stage out of the way*]

[*Brief pause.*—CAROLINE *working.*—WILFRED *standing near* C. *looking down at her*]

CAROLINE. [*On her knees* R. C. *near couch. Low voice—not looking up at him*] When are you goin' to wear 'em?

WILFRED. [*Rather gruffly*] When they 're cut off!

[CAROLINE *looks up at him. Thread or scissors in mouth*]

CAROLINE. You mean—you 're really——

WILFRED. Um hm! [*Assent*]

CAROLINE. But your mother——

WILFRED. She knows.

CAROLINE. Oh!

WILFRED. She 's going to write the General to-night.

CAROLINE. But how about if he won't let you?

WILFRED. [*With boyish determination—but keeping voice down*] I 'll go just the same!

CAROLINE. [*Suddenly jumps to her feet dropping everything on the floor and catches his hand*] Oh I 'm so glad! Why it makes another thing of it! When I said that about staying in Richmond I did n't know! Oh, I *do* want to help all I can!

WILFRED. [*Who has been regarding her burst of enthusiasm rather coldly*] You do!

CAROLINE. Indeed—indeed I do!

WILFRED. Then cut those off for Heaven's sake!

CAROLINE. Oh yes! [*She catches up trousers, jacket, etc., and sits quickly on lounge and excitedly paws them over*] Where shall I cut 'em?

WILFRED. The same place—I have n't grown any!

CAROLINE. Dear me—I don't know where it was!

WILFRED. You stuck some pins in!

CAROLINE. [*Finding pins*] Oh yes—here they are! [*Seizing the trousers and going to work, soon cutting off one of the legs*]

WILFRED. That 's it!

CAROLINE. When did you say she was going to write?

WILFRED. To-night.

CAROLINE. [*Looking up with distrust*] She does n't want you to go does she?

WILFRED. I don't reckon she does—very much!

CAROLINE. She 'll tell him not to let you!

WILFRED. [*Looks at her with wide open eyes*] No!

CAROLINE. That 's the way they always do!

WILFRED. The devil!

CAROLINE. I should think so!

WILFRED. What can I do?

CAROLINE. Write to him yourself!

WILFRED. Good idea!

CAROLINE. Then you can just tell him what you like!

WILFRED. I'll tell him I *can't* stay here!
CAROLINE. [*Excitedly rising—letting the jacket fall on floor at one side*] Tell him you're coming anyhow!
WILFRED. I will!
CAROLINE. Whether he says so or not!
WILFRED. Then he'll say so won't he?
CAROLINE. O' co'se he will—there ain't anythin' else to say!
WILFRED. I'll *do* it! [*Starts to go up* L. *Stops and goes back to* CAROLINE] Say—you're pretty good! [*Catching one of* CAROLINE'S *hands impulsively.*—CAROLINE *looks down at work on floor*] I'll go upstairs an' write it now! [*Starts toward door up* L. C.—CAROLINE *watches him.—He turns back and she looks quickly down again*] Finish those things as soon as you can an' leave 'em here—in the hall closet! [*Indicating outside* L.]
CAROLINE. [*Nodding her head*] Yes—I will.
WILFRED. An' don't let anyone see 'em whatever you do!
CAROLINE. [*Shaking her head*] No—I won't.

[WILFRED *hurries off at door up* L. C. *to* L.—CAROLINE *looks after him with expression of ecstasy—lapsing into dreaminess as she turns to front. Suddenly recollects with a start and a little "O" and slipping down on floor near couch she goes excitedly to work on the trousers, cutting at the other leg with violence and rapidity, getting it nearly cut through so that later it dangles by a few threads. Suddenly she stops work and listens. Then with great haste she gathers up all the things she can, leaving the jacket however where it fell, and jumps to her feet with them in her arms, hugging the confused bundle close against her and hastily tucking in portions that hang out so that* MRS. VARNEY *won't see what it is*]

[*Enter* MRS. VARNEY *door up* L. C. *coming down the stairway and into the room*]

MRS. VARNEY. Oh Caroline—you have n't gone yet!
CAROLINE. Not quite!—I mean not yet!—It does n't begin for an hour you know!
MRS. VARNEY. What does n't begin?
CAROLINE. The party!
MRS. VARNEY. Oh—then you have plenty of time! [*Turning as if to go up* C.]
CAROLINE. [*Hastening across toward door up* L. C. *with her arms full of things*] Yes—but I'll have to go now sure enough! [*Near* C. *she drops the scissors*]
MRS. VARNEY. [*Up* C.—*Turning*] You dropped your scissors dear!
CAROLINE. Oh! [*Coming back for them*] I—I thought I heard something! [*In picking them up she lets the cut-off end of a trouser leg fall but does not notice it and goes toward door up* L. C.]
MRS. VARNEY. [*Coming down* C.] What are you making, Caroline?
CAROLINE. [*Turning near door up* L. C.] Oh—I—I was just altering a dress—that's all! [*Turning to go*]
MRS. VARNEY. [*Stooping and picking up the piece of trouser leg*] Here Carrie!—you dropped a—a—[*Looks at it*]
CAROLINE. [*Hurrying to* MRS. VARNEY *and snatching the piece—stuffing it in with rest*] Oh yes!—Ha ha! [*Looks at* MRS. VARNEY *an instant. The other piece of the trouser leg is hanging by its shred in full sight*] That—that was one of the *sleeves!* [*Turns and hurries off at door up* L. C. *and exits to* R. *at door near foot of stairway*]

[MRS. VARNEY *after a moment turns and goes toward door up* C.—*Seeing something on the couch* R. C. *she stops and goes to pick it up. On coming to it she finds the little gray soldier's jacket left by* CAROLINE *in her hasty scramble. She stoops and picks it up and stands for a moment looking at it*]

[*After a brief pause the sound of hurried opening of front door outside left and tramp of heavy feet in the hall is heard*]

[MRS. VARNEY *looks up and across up left, letting the coat fall on the couch*]

[*Enter* MR. BENTON ARRELSFORD *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*He is a tall fine looking Southern man of about thirty-five or forty, dressed in citizen's clothes—black frock coat, and of rather distinguished appearance. He is seen outside door up* L. C. *hurriedly placing a guard of Confederate soldiers at doors outside up left and also at foot of stairway.*—MRS. VARNEY, *much surprised, moves toward door up* L. C.—MR. ARRELSFORD *at the same time and as noiselessly as possible, hastens into the room*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*As he enters*] Mr. Arrelsford! [*Goes toward* C. *up a little*]
ARRELSFORD. [*Comes quickly across to*

MRS. VARNEY. *Speaks in a low voice and rapidly*] I was obliged to come in without ceremony Mrs. Varney. You 'll understand when I tell you what it is!

MRS. VARNEY. And those men—[*Motions toward guard outside door up* L. C.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] They 're on guard at the doors out there!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] On guard!—You mean that in this house you——

ARRELSFORD. I 'm very much afraid Mrs. Varney, that we 've got to put you to a little inconvenience. [*Glances about cautiously.*—MRS. VARNEY *stands astonished*] Is there anybody in that room? [*Pointing to door up* C.]

MRS. VARNEY. Yes.

ARRELSFORD. Who?

MRS. VARNEY. There are quite a number of ladies there—sewing for the hospitals.

ARRELSFORD. Kindly come this way a little. [*Going down* L. C. *with* MRS. VARNEY] One of your servants has got himself into trouble, Mrs. Varney, an' we 're compelled to have him watched!

MRS. VARNEY. One of my servants!—Why what kind of trouble?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Pretty serious ma'am—that 's the way it looks now!—You 've got an old white-haired niggah here——

MRS. VARNEY. You mean Jonas?

ARRELSFORD. I believe that 's his name!

MRS. VARNEY. You *suspect* him of something!

ARRELSFORD. [*Keeping voice down*] We don't suspect—we *know* what he 's done! [*Glances round before going on*] He 's been down in the Libby Prison under pretense of selling something to the Yankees we 've got in there, an' he now has on his person a written communication from one of those Yankees which he intends to deliver to another one that 's here in Richmond! [ARRELSFORD *goes around in front of table and up* L. *of it to near door up* L. C.]

[MRS. VARNEY *stands motionless a second. She soon recovers*]

MRS. VARNEY. Send for the man! [*Starting to move up stage and toward* L.] Let us see if there 's any truth in such a—

ARRELSFORD. [*Up* L. C. *near* R. *upper corner of table* L. C.—*Quickly stopping her*] No! Not yet! [*Glances quickly round at doors and windows—then speaks in lowered voice but with great intensity and clearness*] I 've got to get that paper! If he 's alarmed he 'll destroy it! I 've *got* to have it! It 's the clue to one o' their cursed plots! They 've been right close on this town for months—trying to make a break in our defenses and get in. This is some rascally game they 're at to weaken us from the inside!—Two weeks ago we got word from one of our agents over there in the Yankee lines telling us that two brothers—Lewis and Henry Dumont—have been under Secret Service orders to do some rascally piece of work here in Richmond. We had close descriptions of these two men but we 've never been able to lay our hands on 'em till last night!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Up* C. *and a little* L. *near* ARRELSFORD.—*Intense whisper*] You 've got them?

ARRELSFORD. [*Up* L. C.—*Low voice, but intense*] We 've got one o' them! An' it won't take long to run down the othah!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] The one—the one you caught—was he here in Richmond?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] No—he was brought in last night with a lot o' men we captured making a raid.

MRS. VARNEY. You mean he was taken prisoner?

ARRELSFORD. [*Nods affirmatively.—Glances round*] Let himself be taken! That 's one of their tricks for getting through our lines when they want to bring a message or give some signal.

MRS. VARNEY. They—they actually get into Libby Prison?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice. Great intensity*] Yes! Damn them! [*This oath indistinctly between his teeth*] But we were on the lookout for this man an' we spotted him mighty quick! I gave orders not to search him or take away his clothes but to put him in with the others and keep the closest watch on him that was ever kept on a man! Here was one of the Dumont brothers an' we knew from his coming in that the othah must be here in the city waiting to hear from him, an' he 'd send him a message the first chance he got!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] But Jonas!—How could he——

ARRELSFORD. [*Low and intense*] Easy enough!—Easy *enough!* He comes down to Libby to sell goubers to the prisoners—we let 'im pass in—he fools around awhile until he gets a chance to brush

against this man Dumont—we 're watching, an' we see a bit of paper pass between 'em! The old nigger 's got that paper on 'im now ma'am, an' besides these men in heah I 've got a dozen more on the outside watching him through the windows! [*Turns and moves up, glancing off up* L. *with some anxiety*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*After slight pause turns and speaks in intense but subdued voice —almost whisper*] The man he gives it to! *He 's* the one we want!

ARRELSFORD. [*Approaching her quickly.—Low voice but intense*] Yes—but I can't wait long! If the niggah sees a man or hears a sound he 'll destroy it before we can jump in on 'im—an' I *must* have that paper! [*Strides quickly up,* MRS. VARNEY *following a step or two.—Speaking off up* L. *in low but sharp voice*] Corporal!

[*Enter* CORPORAL *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*He salutes and stands in the large arched doorway*]

How is it now?

CORPORAL. [*Low voice*] All quiet sir!

[ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *face each other*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low, intense*] It won't do to wait—I 've *got* to get that paper! It 's the key to the game they 're trying to play an' we must have it!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Intense.—Half whisper*] No no—the man who 's going to play it! Get *him!*

ARRELSFORD. [*Low—intense*] That paper the nigger 's got might give us a clue! If not I 'll make him tell who it was *for*—damn it I 'll shoot it out of him! [*Turns to* CORPORAL] How quick can you get at him from that door! [*Pointing off up* L. C. *to door* R. *of stairway*]

CORPORAL. [*No salute. Low voice*] It 's through a hallway sir—and across the dining-room.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Well, take two men and——

MRS. VARNEY. [*Interrupting—touching* ARRELSFORD *to stop him. Low voice*] Why not keep your men out of sight and let me send for him—here?

ARRELSFORD. [*After a second's thought. Low voice*] That 's better—we 'll get 'im in here! While you 're talking to him they can nab him from behind! [*Turns to* CORPORAL] You heard!

CORPORAL. [*Low voice*] Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Keep your men out of sight—get 'em back there in the hall—an' while we 're making him talk send a man down each side and pin him! Hold 'im stiff! He must n't destroy any paper he 's got! Look out for that!

[CORPORAL *salutes and exits with men door up* L. C. *and to* L.—*After exit of* CORPORAL *and* MEN, MRS. VARNEY *moves swiftly to* L. *side, and taking the bell-cord in her hand, turns toward* ARRELSFORD.—*Pause.—Both motionless for four seconds*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*After the motionless pause.—Low voice—but distinct*] *Now* Mr. Arrelsford?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Yes.

[MRS. VARNEY *rings the bell.—Short pause.—Enter* MARTHA *at door up* L. C. *from* R. *She stands up* L. C. *below the doorway*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Down* L. *near mantel*] Is there anyone I can send to the hospital Martha?

MARTHA. [*Up* L. C.] Luther 's out yere, mam.

MRS. VARNEY. Luther? [*Considers*] No —he 's too small. I don't want a boy.

MARTHA. Jonas is yere, mam—if you want him.

MRS. VARNEY. Oh, Jonas—yes! Tell him to come here right away.

MARTHA. Yaas 'm. [*Exits at door up* L. C. *to* R.]

[MRS. VARNEY *crosses back of table* L. C. *to* R. C. *and sits on couch.—*ARRELSFORD *waits up* C.]

[OLD JONAS *appears at the door up* L. C. *coming from* R.—*He is a thick-set gray-haired old negro.—He comes a few steps into the room*]

[MRS. VARNEY *looks at* JONAS *and he at her.—At first he is entirely unsuspecting, but in a moment, seeing* ARRELSFORD *standing up* C. *his eyes shift restlessly for an instant*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*On couch* R. C.] Jonas——

JONAS. [*Up* L. C.] Yes 'm.

MRS. VARNEY. Have you any idea why I sent for you?

JONAS. I heers you was wantin' to sen' to de hossiple ma'am.

[CORPORAL *and* MEN *enter very quietly up* L. C. *from* L. *and on to behind* JONAS]

MRS. VARNEY. Oh—then Martha told you?

[CORPORAL *motions to* MEN *and two instantly step forward—one on each*

side of JONAS, *and stand there motionless*]

JONAS. Wall she did n't ezzackly say whut you—[*Sees man each side of him and stops in the midst of his speech. He does not start, but is frozen with terror. Expression of face scarcely changes. Soon he lowers his eyes and then begins stealthily to get his right hand toward his inside breast pocket*]

[CORPORAL *gives a sharp order.—The two* MEN *instantly seize* JONAS.—CORPORAL *quickly feels in his pockets.*—JONAS *struggles desperately but in an instant the* CORPORAL *has the paper which he hands—with a salute—to* ARRELSFORD.—MRS. VARNEY *has risen as* MEN *seized* JONAS]

ARRELSFORD. [R. *of* MEN *and* JONAS] See if there 's anything more! [ARRELSFORD *stands watching the search*]

[CORPORAL *quickly searches* JONAS—*feeling rapidly along body, arms, down each leg, etc.,* MEN *raising his arms above head, etc., for the purpose. Pushes fingers down into slippers—which are sufficiently loose for this.—After the search* MEN *release* JONAS *and stand guard one on each side of him*]

CORPORAL. [*Rises and comes to salute*] That 's all sir!

[ARRELSFORD *turns quickly away to lamp on table up* C. *opening the paper as he does so.*—MRS. VARNEY *watches him intently.*—ARRELSFORD *reads the paper quickly and at once wheels round on* JONAS *coming down* R. *of him*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice—but sharp and telling*] Who was this for? [JONAS *stands silent*] If you don't tell it 's going to be mighty bad for you! [JONAS *stands silent*] [*After a pause* ARRELSFORD *turns to* MRS. VARNEY] I 'm right sorry ma'am but it looks like we 've got to shoot 'im! [*Eyeing* JONAS *a moment—then goes down* C.] Corporal! [*Motions* CORPORAL *to approach.*—CORPORAL *steps to* ARRELSFORD *on salute.—To* CORPORAL *in a low voice*] Take him outside and get it out of him! String him up till he talks! You understand! [CORPORAL *salutes and is about to turn*] Here! [CORPORAL *turns back to* ARRLESFORD *on salute.*—ARRELSFORD *glances toward the windows ut* R. *and then to* L.] Go down on that side—back of the house! [*Indicating up* L.] And keep it quiet! Nobody must know of this! Not a soul!

[CORPORAL *salutes again and goes up to* MEN. *Gives a low-voiced order.—*MEN *turn on order and march* JONAS *off at door up* L. C. *and off* L. *All very quick with military precision. The* CORPORAL *goes with them.—*ARRELSFORD *stands watching exit of* JONAS *and* MEN *until they are gone and the sound of the closing of heavy front door is heard outside left. He then turns to* MRS. VARNEY.—ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *keep voices down to nearly a whisper in the coming scene—but speak with the utmost force and intensity*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Indicating the paper in* ARRELSFORD'S *hand*] Was there anything in that—

ARRELSFORD. [*Near* MRS. VARNEY *on her* L.] We 've got the trick they want to play!

MRS. VARNEY. But not the *man*—not the man who is to *play* it?

ARRELSFORD. I did n't say that!

MRS. VARNEY. You mean there 's a clue—*to him?*

ARRELSFORD. I mean there 's a clue *to him!*

MRS. VARNEY. Will it answer? Do you know who it is? Do you——

ARRELSFORD. [*Interrupting*] As plain as if we had his name!

MRS. VARNEY. Thank God! [*Motionless an instant—then she extends her hand for the paper*] Let me see! [ARRELSFORD *momentary hesitation—then hands her the paper.—She looks at paper, then reads it aloud—not too easily*] "ATTACK TO-NIGHT—PLAN 3—USE TELEGRAPH."—[*Slight motion or sound from* ARRELSFORD *to quiet her, and a quick glance about.—After the glance about by* ARRELSFORD *she goes on in low voice*] What does it mean?

ARRELSFORD. [*Takes paper from her. Low voice but incisive*] They attack to-night!—The place where they strike is indicated by "Plan 3." [*Finger on the words on paper in his hand*]

MRS. VARNEY. Plan three?

ARRELSFORD. He knows what they mean by that!—It 's arranged beforehand!

MRS. VARNEY. And—the last—the last there! [*Excited motion toward the paper in* ARRELSFORD'S *hands*] "Use Telegraph"?—What does that——

ARRELSFORD. He 's to use our War De-

partment Telegraph Lines to send some false order and weaken that position—the one they indicate by "Plan Three"—so they can break through and come down on the city!

MRS. VARNEY. Oh! [*A breathless exclamation of indignation.—A second's pause—then suddenly*] But the *man*—the man who is to do this—there's nothing about *him!*

ARRELSFORD. There *is* something about him!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Rapidly—almost run together*] What? Where? I don't see it!

ARRELSFORD. "Use Telegraph"! [*A pause.—Both stand motionless regarding one another.*—ARRELSFORD *goes on after playing this pause to the limit*] We know every man on the Telegraph Service—and every man of them's true! But there's some who want to get *on* that service that we don't know quite so well!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Indicating the paper*] He would be one—of course!

ARRELSFORD. There are n't so very many! [*These speeches given suggestively—with slight pause after each.—All very low voice and intense*] It is n't *every* man that's an expert!—The niggah brought this paper to *your house,* Mrs. Varney!

MRS. VARNEY. My—[*Hesitates—beginning to realise*]—my house you say!

ARRELSFORD. For more than a month your daughter has been working to get an appointment for someone on the Telegraph Service—perhaps *she* could give us some idea—[*Stops in the midst of speech and stands looking at* MRS. VARNEY]

[*A moment's pause.—Suddenly* MRS. VARNEY *turns and hurries to window up* R. *and quickly pulls curtains together, turning and facing back to* ARRELSFORD *at same instant*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Almost whisper—but with utmost intensity*] IS HE THERE? [MRS. VARNEY *nods affirmatively. She then comes down toward* ARRELSFORD] Could he hear what we said?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Shakes head negatively. Almost whisper*] He's at the further end! [*Comes back to* R. *of* ARRELSFORD.—ARRELSFORD *glances at windows* R. *nervously.*—MRS. VARNEY—*after a pause—in low voice*] You have a description you say!

ARRELSFORD. [*Nods affirmatively*] At the office.

MRS. VARNEY. Then this man—this Captain Thorne—

ARRELSFORD. [*Breaking in savagely but in low voice*] There *is* no Captain Thorne! This fellow you have in your house is Lewis Dumont!

[*Short pause*]

MRS. VARNEY. You mean—he came here to—

ARRELSFORD. [*With vindictive fury breaking through in spite of himself—yet voice subdued almost to a sharp whisper*] He came to this town—he came to this house—knowing your position and the influence of your name—for the sole purpose of getting some hold on our Department Telegraph Lines!—He's corrupted your servants—he's thick with the men in the telegraph office—what he has n't done God A'mighty knows! But Washington ain't the only place where there's a Secret Service! We've got one here in Richmond! Oh—[*A shake of his head*] two can play at that game—an' it's my move now! [*Goes up* R. C. *a few steps*]

[*Enter* EDITH VARNEY *running rapidly down the stairway up left and in at door up* L. C.—*She wears a white dress and has in her hand the large official envelope which she took upstairs at the end of her first scene.*—ARRELSFORD *goes toward windows up* R.]

EDITH. [*As she runs down the stairway*] Mama! Mama!—Quick Mama! [MRS. VARNEY *hurries toward door up* L. C. *to meet her.*—ARRELSFORD *turns in surprise looking toward door up* L. C.—EDITH *meeting* MRS. VARNEY] Under my window—in the garden—they're hurting someone frightfully—I'm sure they are! Oh—come! [*Starting toward door to lead the way.*—MRS. VARNEY *stands looking at* EDITH.—EDITH *stops surprised that* MRS. VARNEY *does not follow*] If you are n't coming I'll go myself! [*Turning to go*] It's terrible!

MRS. VARNEY. Wait, Edith! [EDITH *stops up* L. C. *and turns back to* MRS. VARNEY.—MRS. VARNEY *goes to her and brings her a little way down* L. C.] I must tell you something—it will be a terrible shock I'm afraid! [EDITH *moves down with* MRS. VARNEY.—ARRELSFORD *turns away a little—standing*

near R. C. *watching window*] A man we trusted as a friend has shown himself a treacherous conspirator against us!

EDITH. [*After a slight pause.—Low voice*] Who? [*Pause.*—MRS. VARNEY *cannot bring herself to speak the name*] Who is it?

ARRELSFORD. [*Swinging round on her at* R. *—Low voice—suppressed vindictiveness*] It is the gentleman, Miss Varney, whose attentions you have been pleased to accept in the place of mine!

[*Short pause.*—EDITH *white and motionless looking at* ARRELSFORD. *Soon she turns her face appealing to her mother.*—MRS. VARNEY *nods slowly in affirmation*]

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Is it Mr. Arrelsford who makes this accusation?

ARRELSFORD. [*Breaking out hotly but keeping voice in suppressed voice*] Yes —since you wish to know! From the first I've had my suspicions that this— [*He stops on seeing* EDITH'S *move toward the window up* R.]

[EDITH, *on cue "Yes" quickly thrusts envelope containing commission into belt or waist of her dress, and starts rapidly toward the window up* R. *crossing* MRS. VARNEY.—ARRELSFORD *breaks off in his speech and steps before her*]

ARRELSFORD [R. C.—*Low voice—speaking rapidly*] Where are you going?

EDITH. [C.—*Low voice*] For Captain Thorne.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Not now!

EDITH. [*Turning with flashing indignation on* ARRELSFORD] Mr. Arrelsford, if this is something you're afraid to say to him —don't you *dare* say it to me!

ARRELSFORD. [*Indignantly.—Low voice*] Miss Varney, if you——

MRS. VARNEY. [L. C.—*Interrupting quickly.—Low voice*] Edith—listen to me! [EDITH *turns quickly to* MRS. VARNEY] Mr. Arrelsford has good reasons for not meeting Captain Thorne just now!

EDITH. I should think he had! [*Quick turn back to* ARRELSFORD] The man who said that to his face would n't *live* to speak again!

MRS. VARNEY. My dear, you don't——

EDITH. [C.] Mama—this man has left his desk in the War Department so that he can have the pleasure of persecuting me! He's never attempted anything in the active service before! And when I ask him to face the man he accuses he turns like a coward!

ARRELSFORD. [*Angrily, but keeping voice down*] Mrs. Varney, if she thinks—

EDITH. [*Low voice*] I think nothing! I *know* that a man of Captain Thorne's character is above suspicion!

ARRELSFORD [*Low voice*] His character! [*Sneeringly*] Where did he come from? —Who is he?

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Who are you?

ARRELSFORD. That's not the question!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Neither is it the question who *he* is! If it were I'd answer it—the answer above all others— he's a soldier who has fought and been wounded for his country!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice but incisive*] We're not so sure of that!

EDITH. [*After a pause of indignation*] He brought us letters from General Stonewall Jackson and from—

ARRELSFORD. [*Quick and sharp*] Jackson was killed before his letter was presented!

EDITH. What does that signify if he wrote it?

ARRELSFORD Nothing—*if* he wrote it! [*Accent on "if" with vindictive fury*]

EDITH. Mr. Arrelsford—if you mean— [MRS. VARNEY *goes to* EDITH *putting her hand on* EDITH'S *arm*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Listen Edith! They have proofs of a conspiracy on our Government Telegraph Lines. [ARRELSFORD *says "Sh" and goes to window up* R.—EDITH *turns from* ARRELSFORD *and looks before her, listening on mention of "Telegraph Lines."*—MRS. VARNEY *leads* EDITH *a little* L. *of* C.—ARRELSFORD *stands near window up* R.] A treacherous conspiracy on the War Department lines to the front. Two men in the Northern Secret Service have been sent here to carry it out. One is in Libby Prison. He's just been brought in—and he allowed himself to be taken prisoner so as to get in here and bring a message to the other. Our old Jonas went there to-day—secretly took that message from him and brought it here! [EDITH *turns toward* MRS. VARNEY *sharply.*] Yes Edith—he brought it to this house! We've just had Jonas in and found that paper on him!

[ARRELSFORD *quietly moves down* R. *looking off through curtains at windows down* R.]

EDITH. [*Rapidly — desperately — in low*

voice] But he has n't said it was for——

[*Heavy sound of front door closing outside* L.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice but incisively*] Not yet—but he will! [EDITH *looks at* ARRELSFORD *not comprehending.—Enter* CORPORAL *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*He stands on salute.*—LADIES *turn to him.*—EDITH *breathless with anxiety.*—MRS. VARNEY *calm but intent.*—ARRELSFORD *goes quickly across from* R. C. *to* CORPORAL *up* L. C. *Low voice*] Well—what does he say?

CORPORAL. [*Low voice*] Nothing!—He won't speak!

ARRELSFORD. [*Sharply, but voice subdued*] Won't speak! What have you done?

CORPORAL. Strung him up three times and——

ARRELSFORD. [*Enraged but keeping his voice down*] Well string him up again! If he won't speak shoot it out of him! Kill the dog! [*Comes blindly down* L.—CORPORAL *salutes and exits at door up* L. C. *to* L.—ARRELSFORD *turns to ladies coming down* L. *back of table*] We don't need the niggah's evidence—there 's enough without it! [*Takes his hat from table*]

EDITH. [*Up* C.—*Low voice*] There is nothing!

ARRELSFORD. [L. *of table* L. C.—*Low voice*] By twelve o'clock to-night you 'll have all the proof you want!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] There 's no proof at all!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] I 'll show it to you at the telegraph office! Do you dare go there with me?

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Dare! [*Moves toward him*] I *will* go with you!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] I 'll call for you in half an hour! [*Goes toward door up* L. C.]

EDITH. Wait! [ARRELSFORD *stops and turns to her up* L. C.] What are you going to do?

ARRELSFORD. [*Comes down back of table.—Low voice but incisive*] I 'm going to let him get this paper! When he looks at it he 'll know what they want him to do—and then we 'll see him try to do it!

EDITH. [L. C.] You 're going to spy on him—hound him like a criminal!

ARRELSFORD. I 'm going to prove what he *is!*

EDITH. Then prove it openly! Prove it at once! It 's a shame to let a suspicion like that rest on an honorable man! Let him come in here and—

ARRELSFORD [*Low voice*] Impossible! [*Goes down* L. *of table a little.*]

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Then do something else but do it now! [*Turning away goes up* C. *a little, speaks desperately*] We must know that he—that he 's innocent! We must know that! [*A thought. Turns to* ARRELSFORD] You say—[ARRELSFORD *makes a movement to go*] Wait! *Wait!* [ARRELSFORD *stops*] You say the man in Libby Prison is his brother—that 's what you said—his brother! Bring him here! Go to the prison and bring that man here!

ARRELSFORD. [L. *of table speaking across it. Subdued exclamation*] What!

EDITH. Let them meet! Bring them face to face! Then you can see whether——

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice.—Speaks rapidly*] You mean—bring them together here?

EDITH. Yes! Here!—Anywhere! Wherever you please!

ARRELSFORD. As if the prisoner was trying to escape?

EDITH. Any way you like—but end it!

ARRELSFORD. When?

EDITH. Now! Now!—I won't have such a suspicion as that hanging over him!

ARRELSFORD. [*After instant's thought*] I 'm willing to try that!—Can you keep him here? [*With a motion toward windows* R.]

EDITH. [*Scarcely more than a movement of lips*] Yes.

ARRELSFORD. It won't be more than half an hour.—Be out there on the veranda.—When I tap on the glass bring him into this room and leave him alone! You understand—*alone!*

EDITH. [*Hardly more than a whisper*] Yes. [*Turns away toward front*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Goes rapidly toward door up* L. C.—*Stops and turns near door*] I rely on you Miss Varney to give him no hint or sign that we suspect—

MRS. VARNEY. [*Interrupting* ARRELSFORD *indignantly*] Mr. Arrelsford!

[EDITH *does not notice anything*]

[ARRELSFORD *stands an instant—then bows stiffly and exits at door up* L. C. *to* L.—*Sound of closing of heavy door outside* L. *shortly after his disappearance.*—EDITH *stands where she was as if stunned.*—MRS. VARNEY *remains* R. C. *looking after* ARRELSFORD—*then turns to* EDITH]

EDITH. [*After pause—not looking round —nearly whisper*] Mama! [*Reaches out her hand as if feeling for help or support.*—MRS. VARNEY *comes down to* EDITH *on her left and takes her hand*] Mama!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] I'm here, Edith!

[*Pause.*—EDITH *thinking of something —her eyes wide open—staring vacantly before her*]

EDITH. [*Holding tight to* MRS. VARNEY'S *hand*] Do you think—do you think—that could be what he meant? [MRS. VARNEY *looking intently at* EDITH] The Commission I got for him—this afternoon—you know!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Yes—yes!

EDITH. The Commission—from the President—for the—for the Telegraph Service! He—he—refused to take it!

MRS. VARNEY. Refused!

EDITH. [*Nodding a little—hardly able to speak*] He said—he said it was for me that he could not!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Sudden deep emphasis*] It's true then!

EDITH. [*Turning quickly to* MRS VARNEY *and trying to stop her by putting her hand over her mouth. Speaking rapidly, breathlessly—yet not in loud voice*] No no! Don't say it!—Don't say it!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Putting* EDITH'S *hand away*] Yes!

EDITH. Oh no!

MRS. VARNEY. Infamous traitor! They ought to lash him through the streets of Richmond!

EDITH. [*Impulsively trying to stop* MRS. VARNEY] No Mama! No—no—no! [*She stops. A moment's pause. She realizes the truth. Speaks in almost a whisper*] Yes—yes—[*Fainter and fainter*] Yes—yes—[*Stops—pauses—stands erect —looks about—makes very slight motion asking* MRS. VARNEY *to leave her*]

[MRS. VARNEY *turns quietly and leaves the room going out at the door up* L. C. *and to* L.—EDITH *stands supporting herself without knowing that she does so—one hand on a table or back of chair.—Soon coming to herself she turns and goes toward the window up* R. *When near* C. *she hesitates, stands there a moment looking toward the window, then brushes her hand quickly across her eyes and takes the President's Commission from her waist or belt. She looks at it a moment, folds it slowly and puts it back again. Walks to the window, throws aside the curtains and pushes it open*]

[*Upon* EDITH *pushing open the window up* R. CAPTAIN THORNE *outside* R. *at some distance, makes sound with chair as though he rose and pushed or set it back, and the sound of his footsteps outside approaching the window briskly follows at once.*—EDITH *moves back away from the window and across to up* L. C. *near table, and stands there looking across at the window up* R. *for an instant, but soon turning away, so that she is not looking at* THORNE *as he enters. —After footsteps and after* EDITH *is motionless at up* L. C. CAPTAIN THORNE *walks easily and unsuspiciously into the room at window up* R., *glancing about as he does so—not seeing* EDITH *until he is a little way in. Upon seeing her he stops an instant where he is, and then goes directly across to her and is about to take her hand as he speaks*]

THORNE. [*Coming to* EDITH *up* L. C.] Miss Varney——

EDITH. [*Quickly snatching her hand away and shrinking backward to left a step or two.—Speaks rapidly—breathlessly—with almost a gasp*] No—don't touch me! [*A second's pause.—She recovers almost instantly*] Oh—it was you! [*Smiling as if at her own stupidity*] Why how perfectly absurd I am! [*Crossing in front of* THORNE *lightly and going to window at up* R.] I'm sure I ought to be ashamed of myself! [*Turns to him at* R.] Do come out a minute—on the veranda.—I want to talk to you about a whole lot o' things! There's half an hour yet before the party! [*Turning to go*] Is n't it a perfectly lovely evening! [*She exits at the window up* R. *with forced gaiety of manner, disappearing in the darkness*]

[THORNE *stands looking at* EDITH *when she first speaks. As she crosses* R. *he is looking down a little but looks slowly up toward front and turns a little after her crossing, looking at her as she stands for a moment in the window up* R. *After her exit he slowly turns toward front and his eyes glance about and down once as he weighs the chances*]

EDITH. [*After brief pause for above—*

calling gaily from outside up R. *not too near the window*] Oh, Cap'n Thorne! [*Emphasis on 'Oh'*]

[THORNE *turns quickly looking off* R. *again. Hesitates an instant. Makes up his mind. Walks rapidly to window up* R. *A very slight hesitation there—without stopping. Exits at window up* R.—*Ring as* THORNE *passes out at the window*]

[CURTAIN]

ACT II

SCENE:—*The same room.*

NINE O'CLOCK.

Furniture as in ACT I. *Electric calciums for strong moonlight outside both windows at* R. *Portières are closed at both windows.*

[MRS. VARNEY *discovered seated at desk down* R.—*She is not busy with anything but sits there to see that no one goes out to the veranda at* R.—*Sound of closing of door outside* L.—*Enter* MISS KITTRIDGE *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*The door up* C. *stands ajar as if she had recently come out*]

MRS. VARNEY. Was it the same man?

MISS KITTRIDGE. [*Pausing up* C.] No—they sent another this time.

MRS. VARNEY. Did you have anything ready?

MISS KITTRIDGE. Oh yes—I gave him quite a lot. We've all been at the bandages—that's what they need most. [MRS. VARNEY *rises. Seems preoccupied. Goes across to up* L. *and looks off.*—MISS KITTRIDGE *watches her rather anxiously*] Did you want anything Mrs. Varney?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Turning at up* L.] No—I—nothing thank you. [MISS KITTRIDGE *is turning to go, but stops when* MRS. VARNEY *speaks again.*—MRS. VARNEY *goes nearer to* MISS KITTRIDGE] Perhaps it would be just as well if any of the ladies want to go, to let them out the other way—through the dining room I mean. We're expecting someone here on important business.

MISS KITTRIDGE. I'll see to it Mrs. Varney.

MRS. VARNEY. Thank you. [*Exit* MISS KITTRIDGE *at door up* C.—MRS. VARNEY *stands a moment, then goes down* L. *and rings bell. Crosses to* R. C., *going back of table* L. C. *Then goes slowly up* C. *waiting*] [*Enter* MARTHA *at door up* L. C. *from* R.] Did Miss Caroline go home?

MARTHA. [*Up* L. C. *near door*] No'm—she's been out yere in de kitchen fur a while.

MRS. VARNEY. In the kitchen!

MARTHA. Yaas'm.

MRS. VARNEY. What has she been doing?

MARTHA. She been mostly sewin' and behavin' mighty strange about sumfin a great deal o' de time. I bleeve she gittin' ready to go home now.

MRS. VARNEY. Ask her to come here a moment.

MARTHA. Yaas'm. [MARTHA *turns and exits up* L. C. *to* R.] [MRS. VARNEY *waits a little. Then goes forward* R. C. *a few steps*] [*Enter* CAROLINE *at door up* L. C. *from* R. *She comes into the room trying to look perfectly innocent*]

MRS. VARNEY. [R. C.] Caroline—[CAROLINE *goes down* C. *with* MRS. VARNEY. *She is expecting to hear something said about the sewing she has been doing*] Are you in a hurry to get home? Because if you can wait a few minutes while I go up stairs to Howard it will be a great help.

CAROLINE. [*Looking round in some doubt*] You want me to—just wait?

MRS. VARNEY. Yes.—You see I—[*Hesitates a little*]—I don't want anyone to go out on the veranda—just now.

CAROLINE. [*Doubtfully*] Oh.

MRS. VARNEY. Edith and—and—

CAROLINE. —And Captain Thorne——

(MRS. VARNEY *nods very slightly*]

CAROLINE. [*Suddenly comprehending*] Oh yes! [*Glances toward windows* R.] I know how *that* is!—I'll attend to it Mrs. Varney! [*Crosses to up* R. C.]

MRS. VARNEY. Yes—if you will—just while I'm upstairs—it won't be long! [*Goes to door up* L. C. *Turns at door*] Be careful won't you dear! [*Exit at door up* L. C. *and up the stairway*]

CAROLINE. [*Up* R. C.] Careful!—Well I should think so! As if I did n't know enough for that! [*Goes toward window up* R. *and pauses up* R. C. *Her face is radiant with the imagined romance of the situation. Goes to window up* R. *and peeps out slyly through curtains. After a moment she turns, an idea having occurred to her, and quickly rolls the couch up across before the window. Kneels on it with her back to the audience and tries to peep through curtains again.—Enter* WILFRED VARNEY *door up* L. C. *from* L.

coming in cautiously and as if he had been watching for an opportunity. He stops just within the door and looks back up stairway. He has on the trousers which CAROLINE *fixed for him in the previous act, and also the Army Jacket.—* CAROLINE *rises and turns from the couch up* R. *and sees* WILFRED.—*He turns to her.—She stands adoring him in his uniform*]

[*These clothes are not by any means new.—The trousers must be all right as to length though showing strange folds and awkwardness at bottom from being cut off and sewed by an amateur. But on no account must there be anything grotesque or laughable*]

CAROLINE. [*Up* R. *Subdued exclamation as she sees* WILFRED *in uniform*] Oh!

WILFRED. [L. C.—*Low voice—speaking across from door*] Mother isn't anywhere around is she?

CAROLINE. [*Coming out to up* C.] She—she just went upstairs.

WILFRED. [*Down* L. C. *a little*] I'm not running away—but if she saw me with these things on she might feel funny.

CAROLINE. [*Half to herself*] She might not feel so very funny!

WILFRED. Well—[*Going over to desk down* R. *and taking papers and letters from pockets*]—you know how it is with a feller's mother. [CAROLINE *nods affirmatively from up* C.] [WILFRED *business of hurriedly finding letter among others—feeling in different pockets for it—so that he speaks without much thinking what he says*] Other people don't care—but mothers—well—they're different.

CAROLINE. [C.—*Speaks absently*] Yes—other people don't care! [*Moves over toward up* L.—*The thought of* WILFRED *actually going gives her a slight sinking of the heart at which she herself is surprised*]

WILFRED. I've written that letter to the General!—Here it is—on'y I've got to end it off some way! [*Pulls a chair sideways to desk and half sits on it—intent on finishing the letter.—Business with pen, etc. and running hand into his hair impetuously*] I'm not going to say "Your loving son" or any such rubbish as that! It would be an almighty let-down! I *love* him of course—*that's* all right you know—but this isn't that kind of a letter! [*Pointing out writing on letter and speaking as if he supposed* CAROLINE *was at his shoulder*] I've been telling him—[*Looking round sees that* CAROLINE *is standing at a considerable distance up* L. C. *looking at him*]—What's the matter?

CAROLINE. Nothing—! That is—I was only——

WILFRED. I thought you wanted to help!

CAROLINE. [*Quickly*] Oh yes—I do! I do! [*Goes down at once to* WILFRED *at desk*]

WILFRED. [*Looks in her face an instant.—A slight pause*] [CAROLINE *stammeringly asks*] The—the—[*Indicating his trousers by a little gesture*]—are they how you wanted 'em?

WILFRED. What?

CAROLINE. Those things. [*Pointing to trousers* WILFRED *is wearing*]

WILFRED. [*Glances at legs*] Oh—*they're* all right!—Fine!—Now about this letter—tell me what you think! [*Turning to letter again*]

CAROLINE. Tell me what you said!

WILFRED. Want to hear it?

CAROLINE. I've got to haven't I? How could I help you if I didn't know what it was all about!

WILFRED. You're pretty good! [*Looks at her briefly*] You *will* help me won't you? [*Catching hold of her* R. *hand as she stands near him on his* L.]

CAROLINE. O' co'se I will—[*After an instant's pause draws hand away from him*]—about the letter!

WILFRED. That's what I mean!—It's mighty important you know! Everything depends on it!

CAROLINE. Well I should *think* so! [CAROLINE *gets chair from up between windows and pulls it around near* WILFRED *on his left, and sits looking over the letter while he reads*]

WILFRED. I just gave it to him strong!

CAROLINE. That's the *way* to give it to him!

WILFRED. You can't fool round with *him* much! He means business! But he'll find out I mean business too!

CAROLINE. That's right—everybody means business!—What did you say?

WILFRED. I said this!—[*Reads letter*] "General Ranson Varney—Commanding Division Army of Northern Virginia—Dear Papa! This is to notify you that I want you to let me come right now! If you don't I'll come anyhow—that's all! The seventeen call is almost out—

the sixteen comes next an' I 'm not going to wait for it! Do you think I 'm a damned coward? Tom Kittridge has gone! He was killed yesterday at Cold Harbor. Billy Fisher has gone. So has Cousin Stephen and he ain't sixteen. He lied about his age but I don't want to do that unless you make me. Answer this right now or not at all!"

CAROLINE. That 's *splendid!*

WILFRED. [*Surprised and delighted*] Do you think so?

CAROLINE. It 's just the thing!

WILFRED. But how 'm I going to end it?

CAROLINE. Why just end it!

WILFRED. How?

CAROLINE. Sign your name.

WILFRED. Nothing else?

CAROLINE. What else is there?

WILFRED. Just "Wilfred"?

CAROLINE. O' co'se!

WILFRED. [*Looks at her an instant then turns suddenly to desk and writes his name*] That 's the thing! [*Holds it up*] Will the rest of it do?

CAROLINE. Do! I should think so! [*Rising*] I wish he had it now! [*Goes toward* C.]

WILFRED. [*Rising*] So do I!—It might take two or three days! [*Moves toward* C.] I *can't* wait that long!—Why the Seventeen call might—[*Stops.—Thinks frowningly*]

CAROLINE. [*Suddenly turning at* C.] I 'll tell you what to do!—Telegraph! [WILFRED *looks at her—she at him.—After an instant he glances at the letter*]

WILFRED. [C. *at* R.] Whew! [*A whistle*] I have n't got money enough!

CAROLINE. [C. *at* L.] 'T won't take so very much!

WILFRED. Do you know what they 're charging now? Over seven dollars a word!

CAROLINE. Let 'em charge! We can cut it down so there 's only a few words an' it means just the same! [*They both go at the letter each holding it on his or her side*] You know the address won't cost a thing!

WILFRED. Won't it?

CAROLINE. No! They never do! There 's a heap o' money saved right now! We can use that to pay for the rest! [WILFRED *looks at her a little puzzled*] What comes next? [*Both look over the letter*]

WILFRED. [*Looks at letter*] "Dear Papa"—

CAROLINE. Leave that out! [*Both scratch at it with pens or pencils*]

WILFRED. I did n't care much for it anyway!

CAROLINE. He knew it before.

WILFRED. Of course he did!—I 'm glad it 's out!

CAROLINE. So 'm I!—What 's next? [*Reading*] "This-is-to-notify-you-that-I want-you-to-let-me-come-right-now." We might leave out that last "to."

WILFRED and CAROLINE. [*Reciting it off together experimentally to see how it reads without the "to"*] "I-want-you—let-me-come-right-now." [*After instant's thought both shake heads*]

WILFRED. [*Shaking head*] No!

CAROLINE. [*Shaking head*] No!

WILFRED. It does n't sound right.

CAROLINE. That 's only a little word anyhow!

WILFRED. So it is. What 's after that? [*Both eagerly look at letter*]

CAROLINE. Wait—here it is! [*Reads*] "If-you-don't — I 'll — come — anyhow—that 's—all." [*They consider*]

WILFRED. We might leave out "that 's all."

CAROLINE. [*Quickly*] No! Don't leave that out! It 's very important. It does n't seem so but it is! It shows—[*Hesitates*] well—it shows that 's all there is about it! That one thing might convince him!

WILFRED. We 've got to leave out something!

CAROLINE. Yes—but not that! Perhaps there 's something in the next! [*Reads*] "The-seventeen-call-is-almost-out"—That 's *got* to stay!

WILFRED. [*Reads*] "The-sixteen-comes-next."

CAROLINE. *That 's* got to stay!

WILFRED. [*Shaking head*] Yes!

CAROLINE. [*Taking it up*] "And-I 'm-not-going-to-wait-for-it!" [*Shaking her head without looking up*] No! No!

WILFRED. [*Shaking head*] No!

CAROLINE. We 'll find something in just a minute! [*Reading*] "Do-you-think-I 'm-a-damned-coward!" [*Both look up from the letter simultaneously and gaze at each other in silence for an instant*]

WILFRED. [*After the pause*] We might leave out the——

CAROLINE. [*Breaking in on him with almost a scream*] No! [*They again regard each other*]

WILFRED. [*After the pause*] That damn 's

going to cost us seven dollars and a half!

CAROLINE. It's *worth* it! Why it's the best thing you've got in the whole thing! Your papa's a general in the army! He'll *understand* that! What's next? I know there's something now.

WILFRED. [*Reads*] "Tom-Kittridge-has-gone. He-was-killed-yesterday-at-Cold-Harbor."

CAROLINE. [*Slight change in tone—a little lower*] Leave out that about his [*Very slight catch of breath*] about his being killed.

WILFRED. [*Looking at* CAROLINE] But he was!

CAROLINE. [*She is suddenly very quiet*] I know he was—but you haven't got to tell him the news have you?

WILFRED. That's so! [*They both cross off the words*]

CAROLINE. [*Becoming cheerful again*] How does it read now? [*They are both looking over the letter*]

WILFRED. It reads just the same—except that about Tom Kittridge.

CAROLINE. [*Looking at* WILFRED *astonished*] Just the same! After all this work!

[*They look at one another rather astounded, then suddenly turn to the letter again and study over it earnestly.—Sound of door bell in distant part of house.—Soon after* MARTHA *crosses outside up* L. C. *coming from door* R. *of stairway and disappearing outside up* L. C. *to* L.—*Sound of door off* L.—*A moment later she enters up* L. C. *from* L. *and goes up the stairway carrying a large envelope.*—WILFRED *and* CAROLINE *are so absorbed in work that they do not observe the bell or* MARTHA'S *movements*]

CAROLINE. [*Looking up from letter*] Everything else has *got* to stay!

WILFRED. Then we can't telegraph—it would take hundreds of dollars!

CAROLINE. [*With determination*] Yes we can! [WILFRED *looks at her.—She takes the letter*] I'll send it! [*Backing up a little toward door up* L. C.]

WILFRED. How can you—

CAROLINE. Never you mind!

WILFRED. [*Follows her up a little*] See here! [*Taking hold of the letter*] I'm not going to have you spending money!

CAROLINE. Ha—no danger! I haven't got any to spend!

WILFRED. [*Releases hold on letter*] Then what are you going to do?

CAROLINE. [*Turning up toward door up* L. C. *with letter*] Oh—I know! [*Turns toward* WILFRED] I reckon Douglass Stafford'll send it for me!

WILFRED. [*Quickly to her*] No he won't! [*They face each other.*—CAROLINE *surprised*]

CAROLINE. What's the reason he won't?

WILFRED. [*Slight pause*] If he wants to send it for *me* he can—but he won't send it for *you!*

CAROLINE. What do you care so long as he sends it?

WILFRED. [*Up* C.—*Looking at* CAROLINE—*slight change of tone*] Well—I care!—that's enough! [*They look at each other, then both lower eyes, looking in different directions*]

CAROLINE. [*Up* L. C.] Oh well—if you feel like that about it—! [*Turns away down* L. C.]

WILFRED. [*Up* C.—*Eyes lowered*] That's the way I feel! [*Pause.*—WILFRED *looks up at her—then moves down toward her*] You—you won't give up the idea of helping me because I feel like that—will you?

CAROLINE. [*Impulsively, with start and turn toward* WILFRED] Mercy no—I'll help you all I can—[WILFRED *impulsively takes her hand as if in gratitude and so quick that she draws it away and goes on with only a slight break*]—about the letter!

WILFRED. That's what I mean! [*They stand an instant,* CAROLINE *looking down,* WILFRED *at her*]

CAROLINE. [*Suddenly turning toward desk and crossing him to* R.] I'm going to see if we can't leave out something else! [*Sits at desk.*—WILFRED *goes down* R. *near her on her* L. *and stands looking over her, intent on the letter*]

[*Enter* MRS. VARNEY, *coming down the stairway and into the room at door up* L. C.—*She has an open letter in her hand. Also brings a belt and cap rolled up together. She pauses near the door and motions someone who is outside up* L. C. *to come in—then comes in a little way.*—MARTHA *follows her down and exits through door* R. *of stairway*]

[*Enter an orderly up* L. C. *from* L. *just from his horse after a long ride. Dusty, faded and bloody uniform; yellow stripes. Face sunburned and grim. He stands near the door up* L. C. *waiting, without*

effort to be precise or formal, but nevertheless being entirely soldierly.—MRS. VARNEY *waits up* L. C. *until he enters*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Turning to* WILFRED *and moving toward* C.] Wilfred! [WILFRED *and* CAROLINE *turn quickly. They both stare motionless for a moment*] Here 's a letter from your Father. He sent it by the orderly. [WILFRED *moves a step or two toward* MRS. VARNEY *and stands looking at her.*—CAROLINE *slowly rises with her eyes on* MRS. VARNEY.—MRS. VARNEY *speaks calmly but with the measured quietness of one who is controlling herself*] He tells me—[*She stops a little but it is only her voice that fails. Holds letter toward* WILFRED] You read it!

[WILFRED, *after a glance at* CAROLINE, *steps quickly to* MRS. VARNEY *and takes the letter. Reads it*—MRS. VARNEY *looking away a little as he does so.*—CAROLINE'S *eyes upon* WILFRED *as he reads.—The* ORDERLY *faced to* R. *on obliqued line of door.* —WILFRED *finishes very soon—only two or three seconds necessary. He glances at the* ORDERLY, *then hands the letter to his Mother as he steps across to him*]

WILFRED. [*Standing before the* ORDERLY] The General says I 'm going back with you!

ORDERLY. [*Saluting*] His orders sir!

WILFRED. When do we start?

ORDERLY. Soon as you can sir—I 'm waiting!

WILFRED We 'll make it right now! [WILFRED *turns and walks quickly to his Mother*] You won't mind, Mother?

[MRS. VARNEY *does not speak, but quietly strokes the hair back from his forehead with a trembling hand—and only once. She then hands him the belt and cap. Old and worn cap. Belt that has seen service*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Your brother wanted you to take these—I told him you were going. [WILFRED *takes them. Puts on the belt at once*] He says he can get another belt—when he wants it. You 're to have his blanket too—I 'll get it. [*She crosses* WILFRED *and goes off at door up* L. C. *to* L., *going back of* ORDERLY]

[WILFRED *finishing adjusting the belt.* —CAROLINE *motionless down* R. *but now looking down at the floor—facing nearly front*]

WILFRED. [*Suppresses excitement*] Fits as if it was made for me! [*To orderly*] I 'll be with you in a jiffy! [WILFRED *goes to* CAROLINE] We won't have to send that now—[*indicating letter they have been working on*] will we? [WILFRED *stands on her* L.—CAROLINE *shakes her head a little without looking up—then slowly raises left hand in which she has the letter and holds it out to him, her eyes still on the floor.*—WILFRED *takes the letter mechanically and keeps it in his hand during the next few lines, tearing it up absent-mindedly*] You 're pretty good—to help me like you did! You can help me again if you—if you want to! [CAROLINE *raises her eyes and looks at him*] *I 'd* like to fight twice as well if— [*Hesitates.*—CAROLINE *looks at him an instant longer and then looks down without speaking*] Good-bye! [WILFRED *holds out his hand.*—CAROLINE *puts her hand in his without looking at him*] Perhaps you 'll write to me about —about helping me fight twice as well! I would n't mind if you telegraphed! That is—if you telegraphed that you would! [*Slight pause.* WILFRED *holding* CAROLINE'S *hand boyishly.*—CAROLINE *looking down.*—WILFRED *trying to say something but not finding the words. —Enter* MRS. VARNEY *at door up* L. C. *from* L.—WILFRED *hears her and turns—leaving* CAROLINE *and meeting his mother near* C.—*She brings an army blanket rolled up and tied.*—WILFRED *takes it and slings it over his shoulder*] Goodbye mother! [*He kisses her rather hurriedly.*—MRS. VARNEY *stands passive*] You won't mind, will you! [WILFRED *crosses at once to* ORDERLY] Ready sir! [*Saluting.*—ORDERLY *turns and marches off at door up left.*—WILFRED *follows the* ORDERLY.—*Brief pause*]

[*The opening and heavy closing of the door outside left is heard, and then it is still.*—MRS. VARNEY *is the first to move. She turns and walks slowly up a few steps, her back to the audience, but with no visible emotion. It is as if her eyes filled with tears and she turned away.—When* MRS. VARNEY *stops up* C. CAROLINE *moves a little, her eyes still down, walking slowly across toward the door up* L. C.—MRS. VARNEY *hears her and turns in time to speak just before she reaches the door up* L. C.]

MRS. VARNEY. Going, dear? [CAROLINE

nods her head a little without looking round] Oh yes! [*Speaks with a shade of forced cheerfulness*] Your party of course! You ought to be there! [CAROLINE *stops and speaks back into the room without looking at* MRS. VARNEY]

CAROLINE. [*Subdued voice. With a sad little shake of head*] There won't—there won't be any party to-night. [*Exit at door up* L. C. *to* L.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*After an instant's wait starts toward door up* L. C.] Caroline! Stop a moment! [*At door*] I don't want you to go home alone! [*She goes down* L. *and rings the bell*]

CAROLINE. [*Outside up* L.] Oh I don't mind!

[*Sounds of front door and heavy steps of men outside up left.*—MRS. VARNEY *goes up* L. C. *looking off, and then retires back a little to up* C.]

[*Enter* ARRELSFORD *and two soldiers at the door up* L. C. *from* L.—ARRELSFORD *motions men to stand at the door and goes quickly to* MRS. VARNEY *up* C.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Is he—? [*A motion toward window at* R.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*To* ARRELSFORD, *hardly above a whisper*] Yes!

[*Enter* CAROLINE *at door up* L. C. *from* L.]

CAROLINE. [*Up* L. C.] Oh Mrs. Varney—there 's a heap o' soldiers out yere! You don't reckon anything 's the mattah do you?

[*Enter* MARTHA *at door up* L. C. *from door* R. *of stairway.*—ARRELSFORD *goes back of* MRS. VARNEY *to* R.—*Looks through curtains of window down* R.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Hastening to* CAROLINE] Sh!—No—there 's nothing the matter! Martha, I want you to go home with Miss Mitford—at once! [*Urging* CAROLINE *off*] Good night dear! [*Kissing her*]

CAROLINE. [*Up* L. C.] Good night! [*Looks up in* MRS. VARNEY'S *face*] You don't reckon she could go with me to—[*Hesitates*] to somewhere else, do you?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Up* L. C., R. *of* CAROLINE] Why where do you want to go?

CAROLINE. Just to—just to the telegraph office!

[ARRELSFORD *turns sharply and looks at* CAROLINE *from window down* R.]

MRS. VARNEY. Now! At this time of night!

CAROLINE. I've *got* to! Oh, it 's very important business!

[ARRELSFORD R. *watching* CAROLINE]

MRS. VARNEY. Of course, then, Martha must go with you! Good night!

CAROLINE. Good night! [*Exit* CAROLINE *and* MARTHA *at door up* L. C. *to* L.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Calling off up* L. C. *to* L.] Martha, don't leave her an instant!

MARTHA. [*Outside* L. *or just going*] No 'm—I'll take care!

[MARTHA *does not come into room for foregoing scene. She remains back of archway or opening up* L. C.—*Heavy sound of door outside up* L.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Going up* C. *quickly—low, sharp voice*] What is she going to do at the telegraph office?—What is it?

MRS. VARNEY. [*Going down* L. C. *a little. Low voice*] I've no idea! [*Accent on first syllable of "idea"*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Has she had any conversation with him? [*Motion toward* R.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Why—they were talking together here—early this evening! But it is n't possible that Caroline could have any——

ARRELSFORD. [*Interrupting. Low voice*] *Anything* is possible! [*Goes over to* CORPORAL *at up* L. C. *quickly, passing back of* MRS. VARNEY.—MRS. VARNEY *moves to up* R. C. *as* ARRELSFORD *crosses at back*] Have Eddinger follow that girl! She 's going to the telegraph office.—Don't let her get any despatch off until I see it! Make no mistake about that! [CORPORAL *exits with salute at door up* L. C. *to* L.—*Brief pause.*—ARRELSFORD *turns to* MRS. VARNEY] Are they both out there? [*Motioning toward veranda at* R]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Up* R. C.—*Low tone*] Yes!—Did you bring the man from Libby Prison?

ARRELSFORD. [L. *of her.—Low voice*] The guard 's holding him out in the street. When she gets Thorne in here and leaves him alone I 'll have them bring him up to that window [*Pointing to window up* R.] and then shove him into the room.

[CORPORAL *re-appears at the door up* L. C. *from* L. *and awaits further orders.*—ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *continue in low tones*]

MRS. VARNEY. [R. C.] Where shall I——

ARRELSFORD. Out there [*Pointing up* L. *and going toward door a little*] where you can get a view of this room!

MRS. VARNEY. But if he sees me——

ARRELSFORD. He won't if it 's dark in the hall! [*Turns to* CORPORAL *and gives order in low distinct voice*] Shut off those lights out there! [*Indicating lights outside the door or archway up left.*—CORPORAL *exits up* L. C. *to* L.—*An instant later the lights outside up* L. *go off*] We can close these curtains can't we?

MRS. VARNEY. Yes. [ARRELSFORD *draws curtains or portières across at door or archway up* L. C.]

[CORPORAL *and* MEN *are out of sight behind the drawn curtains*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Turning front*] I don't want much light in here! [*Indicating drawing-room*]

[ARRELSFORD *goes to table up* C. *and turns down the lamp.*—MRS. VARNEY *turns down lamp on desk down* R.—*Stage in dim light*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Carefully moves couch away from window up* R. *and opens portières of window.*—*Almost in a whisper*] Now open those curtains!—Carefully!—Don't attract attention! [*Indicating window down* R.]

[MRS. VARNEY *very quietly draws back the curtains to window down* R.—*Moonlight on through window down* R. *covering as much of stage as possible. Moonlight also strong on backing up* R. *and also in across room from there*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Moving over to up* L. C.—*Speaking across to* MRS. VARNEY *after the lights are down*] Are those women in there yet? [*Indicating door up* C.]

MRS. VARNEY. Yes.

ARRELSFORD. Where 's the key? [MRS. VARNEY *moves noiselessly to the door up* C.] Is it on this side?

[MRS. VARNEY *turns and nods affirmatively*]

ARRELSFORD. Lock the door!

[MRS. VARNEY *turns the key as noiselessly as possible.*—EDITH *suddenly appears at window up* R. *coming on quickly and closing the window after her.*—MRS. VARNEY *and* ARRELSFORD *both turn and stand looking at her.*

EDITH. [*Going down* R. C. *and stretching out left hand toward* MRS. VARNEY.—*Very low voice—but breathlessly*] Mama! [MRS. VARNEY *hurries forward with her* C.—EDITH *on her* R.—ARRELSFORD *remains up* L. C. *looking on*] I want to speak to you!

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Low tone.*—*Stepping forward*] We can't wait!

EDITH. [C.] You must! [ARRELSFORD *moves back protestingly.*—EDITH *turns to* MRS. VARNEY.—*Almost a whisper*] I can't—I can't do it! Oh—let me go!

MRS. VARNEY. [C.—*Very low voice*] Edith! You were the one who——

EDITH. [*Almost a whisper*] I was sure then!

MRS. VARNEY. Has he confessed?

EDITH. [*Quickly*] No no! [*Glance toward* ARRELSFORD]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice—sharp*] Don't speak so loud!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] What is it Edith—you *must* tell me!

EDITH. [*Almost a whisper*] Mama—he loves me! [*Breathless*]—Yes—and I—— Oh—let someone else do it!

MRS. VARNEY. You don't mean that you—

[ARRELSFORD *comes forward quickly* L. C.]

EDITH. [*Seeing* ARRELSFORD *approach and crossing* MRS. VARNEY *to him*] No no! Not now! Not now!

MRS. VARNEY. [C. R.—*Low voice*] More reason now than ever!

ARRELSFORD. [C. L.—*Low voice*] We *must* go on!

EDITH. [C.—*Turning desperately upon* ARRELSFORD.—*Low voice*] Why are *you* doing this?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Because I please!

EDITH. [*Low voice—but with force*] You never pleased before! Hundreds of suspicious cases have come up—hundreds of men have been run down—but you preferred to sit at your desk in the War Department!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Edith!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] We won't discuss that now!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] No—we 'll end it! I 'll have nothing more to do with the affair!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] You won't!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] Edith—!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Nothing at all!—Nothing!—Nothing!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice but with vehemence*] At your own suggestion Miss Varney, I agreed to a plan by which we could criminate this friend of yours—or establish his innocence. At the critical moment—when everything 's ready, you propose to withdraw—making it a failure and perhaps allowing him to escape altogether!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Low voice*] I can't allow you to do this Edith!

EDITH. [*Low voice—desperately*] He's there!—the man is there—at the further end of the veranda! What more do you want of me!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice. Sharp. Intense*] Call him into this room! If anyone else should do it he'd suspect—he'd be on his guard!

EDITH. [*After pause. Low voice*] Very well—I'll call him into this room. [*Turning away as if to do so*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] One thing more! [EDITH *turns back to him*] I want him to have this paper! [*Holding out paper that was taken from* JONAS *in* ACT I] Tell him where it came from—tell him the old niggah got it from a prisoner in Libby!

EDITH. [*Quietly. Low voice*] Why am I to do this?

ARRELSFORD. [*Low but very strong*] Why not? If he's innocent where's the harm?—If not—if he's what I think he is—the message on that paper will send him to the telegraph office to-night and that's just where we want him!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] I never promised that!

ARRELSFORD. [*Hard sharp voice though subdued*] Do you still believe him innocent?

[*Pause.*—EDITH *slowly raises her head erect. Looks* ARRELSFORD *full in the face*]

EDITH. [*Almost whisper*] I still—believe him—innocent!

ARRELSFORD. Then why are you afraid to give him this? [*Indicating paper*]

[*Pause.*—EDITH *turns to* ARRELSFORD. *Stretches out her hand for the paper.* —ARRELSFORD *puts the paper in* EDITH'S *hand.*—ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *watch her.—She turns and moves up a few steps toward the window. Stops and stands listening up* L. C.—*Noise of chair being set back on veranda outside* R.]

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Captain Thorne's coming.

ARRELSFORD. [*Going to door up* L. C. *and holding curtains back*] This way Mrs. Varney!—Quick!—Quick! [ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *hasten off at the door up* L. *closing portières after them*]

[EDITH *moves across to down* L. C. *and stands near table.—Sound of* THORNE'S *footsteps on veranda outside windows* R.—EDITH *slowly turns toward the window up* R. *and stands looking at it with a fascinated dread.* —THORNE *opens the window up* R. *and enters at once, coming a few steps into the room. He stops and stands an instant looking at* EDITH *as she looks strangely at him. Then he goes to her*]

THORNE. [*Low voice—near* EDITH] Is anything the matter?

EDITH. [*Slightly shakes her head before speaking.—Nearly a whisper*] Oh no! [*Emphasize "no."—Stands looking up in his face*]

THORNE. [*Low voice*] You've been away a long time!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] Only a few minutes!

THORNE. [*Low voice*] Only a few years.

EDITH. [*Easier*] Oh—if that's a few years—[*Turning away front a little*] what a lot of time there is!

THORNE. [*Low voice*] There's only to-night!

EDITH. [*Turning to him. A breathless interrogation*] What!

THORNE. [*Taking her hands and drawing her into his arms*] There's only to-night and you in the world!—Oh—see what I've been doing! I came here determined not to tell you that I love you—I love you—I love you—and for the last half hour I've been telling you nothing else! Ah, my darling—there's only to-night and you!

EDITH. [*A breathless whisper*] No no—you must n't! [*A quick apprehensive glance around toward left and back*]—*not now!* [*Her head is turned a little away from him*]

[THORNE, *still holding her, is motionless an instant. Then he gives a lightning-quick glance about—to* R. *and up—and almost instantly his eyes are back to her. He slowly releases her and stands back a step*]

THORNE. [*Low voice*] Don't mind what I said Miss Varney—I must have forgotten myself. Believe me I came to make a friendly call and—and say good-bye. [*Bowing slightly*] Permit me to do so now. [*Turns up at once making turn to* L. *and walks toward door up* L. C.]

EDITH. [*Quickly across to* C. *as* THORNE *goes*] Oh!—Cap'n Thorne! [*This is timed to stop* THORNE *just before he reaches the closed portières of door up* L. C.—THORNE *turns up* L. C. *and looks at* EDITH.—*Calcium across from window*

R. *on him.*—EDITH *trying to be natural—but her lightness somewhat forced*] Before you go I—[*Slight quiver in her voice*]—I wanted to ask your advice about something! [*She stands near* C. *turned a little to front*]

[THORNE *looks at her motionless an instant. Then turns his head slowly toward the portières on his left. Turns back to* EDITH *at* C. *again and at once moves down to her on her* L.]

THORNE. [*As he comes down to* EDITH] Yes?

EDITH. What do you think—this means? [*Holds the piece of paper out toward* THORNE *but avoids looking in his face*]

THORNE. [L. *of* EDITH. *Stepping quickly to her and taking the paper easily*] Why, what is it? [*A half-glance at the paper as he takes it*]

EDITH. It's a—[*Hesitates slightly. Recovers at once and looks up at him brightly*] That's what I want you to tell me.

THORNE. [*Looking at the paper*] Oh—you don't know!

EDITH. [*Shaking her head slightly*] No. [*Stands waiting—eyes averted.*—THORNE *glances quickly at her an instant on peculiar tone of "no"*]

THORNE. [*Looking again at the paper*] A note from someone?

EDITH. It might be.

THORNE. [*Glancing about*] Well, it's pretty dark here! [*Sees the low-turned lamp on desk down* R. *and crosses to it*] If you'll excuse me I'll turn up this lamp a little—[*Comes to desk*] then we can see what it is. [*Turns up lamp.—Lights on foot* 1–2] There we are! [*Looks at paper, holding it down in light from lamp. Reads as if with much difficulty*] "Attack . . . . to-night" . . . . There's something about "Attack to-night"—[*Turns easily to* EDITH] Could you make out what it was?

[EDITH *shakes head negatively. Her lips move, but she cannot speak. She turns away*]

[THORNE *looks at her a second—then a slow turn of head (turning it to his* L.) *glancing up stage.—Then quickly turns to examine the paper again*] "Attack . . . . to-night . . . . plan . . . . three." [*Looks up to front as if considering. Repeats*] Plan three! [*Considering again.—Slight laugh*] Well—this thing must be a puzzle of some kind, Miss Varney. [*Turning to* EDITH]

EDITH. [*Slowly. Strained voice, as if forcing herself to speak*] It was taken from a Yankee prisoner!

THORNE. [*Instantly coming from former easy attitude into one showing interest and surprise. Looking at* EDITH] So! —Yankee prisoner eh? [*While speaking he is holding paper in right hand as if to look at it again when he finishes speaking to* EDITH]

EDITH. Yes—down in Libby!—He gave it to one of our servants—old Jonas!

THORNE. [*Turning quickly to paper*] Why here—this might be something—[*Looks again at the paper*] "Attack to-night—plan three—use Telegraph—" [*Second's pause. He looks up front*] Use telegraph! [*Turns quickly to* EDITH *and goes toward her*] This might be something important Miss Varney! Looks like a plot on our Department Telegraph Lines! Who did Jonas give it to?

EDITH. No one!

THORNE. No one!—Well—how—how—

EDITH. We took it away from him!

THORNE. Oh! [*An "Oh!" meaning "What a pity!"*] [*Starting at once as if to cross above* EDITH *to door up* L. C.] That was a mistake!

EDITH. [*Detaining him.—Speaks rapidly—almost a whisper*] What are you going to do?

THORNE. [*Strong. Determined*] Find that nigger and make him tell who this paper was for—he's the man we want! [*Crossing back of her—toward door up* L. C.]

EDITH. [*Turning quickly to him*] Cap'n Thorne—they've lied about you!

THORNE. [*Wheeling round like a flash up* L. C. *and coming down quickly to her*] Lied about me! What do you mean? [*Seizing her hands and looking in her face to get the answer there*]

EDITH. [*Quick—breathless—very low—almost whisper*] Don't be angry—I did n't think it would be like this!

THORNE. [*With great force*] Yes—but what have you done?

EDITH. [*Breaking loose from him and crossing to* L.] No!

THORNE. [*As she crosses before him—trying to detain her*] But I must know!

[*Sound of heavy door outside* L. *and of steps and voices in the hall—"Here! This way!" etc.*]

CORPORAL. [*Speaking outside door up* L. C.

to L.] This way! Look out on that side will you?

[THORNE *on hearing* CORPORAL *etc. backs away to* R. C. *keeping his eyes on door up* L. C. *and at same time snatching revolver from holster. Stands motionless down* L. C.—*eyes on door—revolver ready*]

EDITH. Oh! [*Going rapidly up* L.]—I don't want to be here! [*She exits door up* L. *and goes up stairs out of the way of the soldiers*]

[*Enter at once on exit of* EDITH, CORPORAL *with two men at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*They cross rapidly toward window up* R., CORPORAL *leading carrying a lighted lantern.*—THORNE, *seeing* CORPORAL, *at once breaks position and moves across towards up* C. *as men cross, watching* CORPORAL *who is up* R. C. *directing his men*]

CORPORAL. [*Near window up* R.] Out here! Look out now!

[*The men exit at window up* R.]

THORNE. [*Quick on* CORPORAL'S *speech so as to stop him at* R. C.] What is it Corporal? [*Putting revolver back into holster*]

[THORNE *stands up* C. *in light from window up* R. *facing* CORPORAL]

CORPORAL. [*Turning at up* R. C. *and saluting*] Prisoner sir—broke out o' Libby! We've run him down the street—he turned in here somewhere! If he comes in that way [*Indicating the window down* R.] would you be good enough to let us know!

THORNE. Go on, Corporal! [*Starts across to window down* R.] I'll look out for this window!

[*Exit* CORPORAL *window up* R.]

[THORNE *strides rapidly to window down* R. *Pushes curtains back each side and stands within the window looking off. Right hand on revolver in holster. Left hand holding curtains back.—Moonlight on through window down* R. *across stage and also from window up* R.—*Dead pause for an instant.—Suddenly the two men who crossed with* CORPORAL *appear at window up* R. *holding* HENRY DUMONT. *With a sudden movement they force him on through the window into the room and disappear quickly outside off to* R.—DUMONT *stands an instant where he landed up* R. C.—*Looks back through window up* R., *not comprehending what is going on. He gives a quick glance about the room.* DUMONT *wears a worn and tattered uniform of a United States Cavalry private. He is pale as from lack of food—but not emaciated or ill.—Hold this Tableau:*—THORNE *standing motionless just within the window down* R. *his eyes sharply watching off to* R., *his hand on the butt of his revolver;*—DUMONT *up* R. C., *holding position he came to on being forced into the room, with enough light through window up* R. *to show the blue of his uniform.—After a second's pause* DUMONT *turns from the window and looks slowly about the room, taking in the various points like a caged animal, turning his head very slowly as he looks one way and another. Soon he moves a few steps down toward* C. *and pauses. Turns and makes out a doorway up* L. C. *and after a glance round, he walks rapidly toward it. Just before he reaches the door the blades of four bayonets come down into position between the drawn curtain or portières, barring his exit there.—Light from outside window* R. *to strike across on blades of bayonets. —Very slight steely click of bayonets striking together as they come down into position.*—DUMONT *stops instantly and stands motionless.*—THORNE *at window down* R. *turns sharply on click of bayonets looking into room, and advancing a few steps in as he does so, coming to a stand with right hand on chair that is near, and trying to see who it is on the opposite side of the room.—Bayonets withdrawn at once after they are shown.*—DUMONT *turns from the door and begins to move slowly down at* L. *along the wall. Just as he is coming around table down* L. *toward* C. *he sees* THORNE *and stops dead.—Both men motionless, their eyes upon each other.—Hold it several seconds. —*DUMONT *makes a start as if to escape through window up* R., *moving across toward it*]

THORNE. [*Quick and loud order as* DUMONT *starts toward window*] Halt!—You're a prisoner!

[DUMONT, *after instant's hesitation on* THORNE'S *order, starts rapidly toward window up* R. *again.*—THORNE

heads him off, meeting him up R. C. *and seizes him*]

THORNE. [*As he heads* DUMONT *off*] Halt! I say!

[DUMONT *grapples with* THORNE *and the two men struggle together, moving quickly down stage to* L. C., *very close to front—getting as far as possible from those who are watching them*]

THORNE. [*Loud voice, as they struggle down stage*] Here's your man Corporal! What are you waiting for! Here's your man I say!

DUMONT. [*When they are down as far as possible—holding* THORNE *motionless an instant and hissing out between his teeth, without pause or inflection on the words*] ATTACK TO-NIGHT—PLAN THREE—TELEGRAPH—DO YOU GET IT?

THORNE. [*Quick on it*] YES!

[*This dialogue in capitals shot at each other with great force and rapidity—and so low that people outside door up* L. *could not hear*]

DUMONT. [*Low voice—almost whisper*] They're watching us! Shoot me in the leg!

THORNE. [*Holding* DUMONT *motionless*] No no! I can't do that!

DUMONT. You must!

[*They are struggling desperately—but with little movement*]

THORNE. [*Quick on it*] I can't shoot my own brother!

DUMONT. It's the only way to throw 'em off the scent!

THORNE. Well I won't do it anyhow!

DUMONT. If you won't do it I will! Give me that gun! [*Pushing left arm out to get revolver*]

THORNE. [*Holding* DUMONT'S *arm back motionless*] No no Harry! You'll hurt yourself!

DUMONT. [*Struggling to get revolver*] Let me have it!

[*They are now struggling in real desperation, moving quickly up* C. *as they do so, coming into light from windows at* R]

THORNE. [*Calling out as he struggles up* C. *with* DUMONT] Here's your man Corporal! What's the matter with you!

[DUMONT *gets hold of* THORNE'S *revolver and pulls it out of holster*]

THORNE. [*As* DUMONT *holds him up* C. *and is getting revolver*]—[*Loud—aspirated—sharp*] Look out Harry! You'll hurt yourself! [*Gets his* R. *hand on revolver to hold it*] [DUMONT *manages with his* L. *hand to wrench* THORNE'S *hand loose from the revolver and hold it up while he seizes the weapon with his* R. *hand and pulls it out of the holster. At the same time he shoves* THORNE *off toward down* R.]

THORNE. [*As* DUMONT *throws him off* R.] Look out! [*As* DUMONT *throws* THORNE *off toward down* R. *he backs quickly—with same motion—up* C. *the revolver in his right hand.—Before* THORNE *can recover and turn at right* DUMONT *fires.—There is a quick sharp scream from ladies outside up* L. C. *behind portières.*—DUMONT *staggers down* C. *and falls, holding the revolver in his hand until he is down and then releasing it, so that it lies on the floor near him*]

THORNE. [*Back against chair at* R.—*which he was flung against*] Harry—you've shot yourself! [*Instantly on this he dives for the revolver that* DUMONT *has dropped and gets it, coming up on same motion with it in right hand and stands in careless attitude just over* DUMONT'S *body to* R. *of it.—Men's voices heard outside up* L. *and outside windows* R. *and up* R.]

[*Instantly on* THORNE *stooping to snatch up revolver, enter at up* L. C. *through the portières* ARRELSFORD *and* MEN *followed by* EDITH, MRS. VARNEY *and* MISS KITTRIDGE, *and from windows up* R. *and* R. *the* CORPORAL *and* MEN.—ARRELSFORD *runs at once to table up* C. *and turns up the lamp.—Others stand on tableau—*MRS. VARNEY *and* EDITH *at left,* MISS KITTRIDGE *up* L. MEN *in doorway and up* R. C. *near window*]

[*Lights full on instantly on* ARRELSFORD *reaching the lamp*]

ARRELSFORD, MRS. VARNEY, EDITH, MISS KITTRIDGE, CORPORAL, MEN. [*As they enter*] Where is he!—What has he done!—He's shot the man!—This way now! [*These different exclamations from the different characters and nearly together as they rush into the room, but quieting down at once as they see* THORNE *standing over* DUMONT]

THORNE. [*Instantly on people stopping quiet.—With easy swing of revolver crossing toward* C. *as he brings it up to put back into holster*] There's your prisoner Corporal—look out for him! [*Stands at* R. C. *putting revolver back into holster*]

[CURTAIN]

ACT III

SCENES:—*The War Department Telegraph Office.*

TEN O'CLOCK

Plain and somewhat battered and grimy room on the second floor of a public building. Moldings and stucco-work broken and discolored. Stained and smoky walls. Large windows—the glass covered with grime and cobwebs. Plaster fallen or knocked from walls and ceiling in some places. All this from neglect—not from bombardment. The building was once a handsome one, but has been put to war purposes. Very large and high double doors up R. C. *obliqued. These doors open to a corridor showing plain corridor-backing of a public building. This door must lead off well to* R. *so that it shall not interfere with window showing street up* L. C. *Three wide French windows up* L. *and* L. C. *obliqued a little and opening down to floor, with balcony outside extending* R. *and* L. *and showing several massive white columns, bases at balcony and extending up out of sight as if for several stories above. Part of the building with columns shown in perspective, as if a wing. Backing of windows showing night view of city roofs and buildings as from height of second floor. Large disused fireplace with elaborate marble mantel in bad repair and very dirty on* R. *side behind telegraph tables. Door up* C. *opening to cupboard with shelves on which are battery jars and telegraph office truck of various kinds. Room lighted by gas on* R. *above* R. *telegraph table, several burners branching from a main pipe and all to turn on and off easily by means of one cock in main pipe, just above the telegraph table. Show evening through windows up* L.—*dark, with lights of buildings very faint and distant, keeping general effect outside window of darkness in order to avoid distracting attention from interior of room. Electric Calciums (moonlight) to throw on at windows up* L. C. *and* L. *on cues, and also to hold on the massive white columns and on the characters who go out on the balcony. Corridor outside door up* R. C. *not strongly illuminated. In the room itself fair light but not brilliant. Plain, solid table with telegraph instruments down* R. C. *Another plain plank table with instruments along wall at right side. Table down* R. C. *braced to look as if fastened securely to the floor. Also see that wire connections are properly made from all the instruments in the room to wires running up the wall on right side, thence across along ceiling to up* L. C. *and out through broken lights in half circle windows above the French windows at up* L. C. *This large bunch of wires leading out, in plain sight, is most important. Large office clock over mantel set at* 10 *o'clock at opening and to run during the Act.*

Two instruments, A. *and* D., *on table down* R. C.—A. *is at* R. *end of table and is the only one regularly used at that table,* D. *being for emergency. Two instruments,* B. *and* C. *on long table at* R. *against fireplace.* B. *is at lower end of table.* C. *at upper end. One chair at table down* R. C. *Two chairs at table* R. *One chair up* C. *No sound of cannonading in this Act.*

[*At opening there are two Operators at work, one at table down* R. C., *one at table on* R. *side. They are in old gray uniforms, but in shirt sleeves. Coats are hung up or thrown on chairs. Busy click-effect of instruments from an instant before curtain rises, and continues. After first continued clicking for a moment there are occasional pauses. Messengers* A. *and* B. *near door up* R. C. *Messenger No.* 3 *in front of door* C. *talking to messenger No.* 4. *Messenger No.* 2 *looking out of middle window over* L.]

SECOND OPERATOR. [LIEUT. ALLISON] [*At table* R.—*instrument* B.—*finishing writing a dispatch*] Ready here! [*Messenger* A. *steps quickly forward and takes dispatch*] Department! The Secretary must have it to-night! [MESSENGER *salutes and exits quickly at door up* R. C. *with dispatch.—Short pause.—Other* MESSENGERS *standing on attention*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [LIEUT. FORAY] [*At table down* R. C.—*instrument* A.] Ready here! [MESSENGER B.—*steps quickly*

down and takes dispatch from First Operator] To the President—General Watson—marked private! [Messenger B. *salutes and exits quickly doors up* R. C.]

[*Business continues a short time as before.—Busy clicking of instruments. calls of sentries far below in the square.*—Second Operator *at* R. *moves to another instrument when it begins to click and answers call*]

[First Messenger *enters hurriedly at doors up* R. C. *and comes down* L. *of table* R. C. *with dispatch*]

First Messenger. Major Bridgman!

First Operator. [*Looking up from work*] Bridgman! Where 's that?

Second Messenger. [*Glances at dispatch*] Longstreet's Corps.

First Operator. That 's yours Allison. [*Resumes work at instrument* A.]

[Second Operator *holds out hand for dispatch.*—First Messenger *crosses back of table* R. C. *gives it to him and exits at door up* R.—Second Operator *sends message on instrument* B. —*Sound of band of music in distance increasing very gradually.*—Messengers *go to windows up* L. C. *and look out but glance now and then at* Operators]

Second Messenger. [*Opening* C. *window and looking out while music is coming on and still distant*] What 's that going up Main Street?

Third Messenger. [*Looks out*] Richmond Grays!

Second and Fourth Messengers. [*Together*] No!

[Messengers *look out through middle window up* L.]

Second Messenger. That 's what they are, sure enough!

Third Messenger. They 're sending 'em down the river!

Second Messenger. Not to-night!

Fourth Messenger. Seems like they was, though!

Third Messenger. I did n't reckon they 'd send the Grays out without there was something going on!

Fourth Messenger. How do you know but what there is?

Second Messenger. To-night! Why good God! It 's as quiet as a tomb!

Fourth Messenger. I reckon that 's what 's worrying 'em! It 's so damned unusual!

[*Sound of band gradually dies away. Before music is quite off,* First Operator *finishes a dispatch from instrument* A. *and calls*]

First Operator. Ready here! [Third Messenger *comes down to him to* L. *of table* R. C. *and takes dispatch*] Department—from General Lee—duplicate to the President!

[Third Messenger *salutes and exits quickly at doors up* R. C. *Business goes on.—Enter an* Orderly, *doors up* R. C. *Goes quickly down to* First Operator. Second *and* Fourth Messengers *stand talking near windows up* L. C.]

Orderly. [L. *of table* R. C. *salutes*] The Secretary would like to know if there 's anything from General Lee come in since nine o'clock this evening.

First Operator. Just sent one over an' a duplicate went out to the President.

Orderly. The President 's with the Cabinet yet—he did n't go home! They want an operator right quick over there to take down a cipher.

First Operator. [*Calling out to* Second Operator] Got anything on, Charlie?

Second Operator. Not right now!

First Operator. Well go over to the Department—they want to take down a cipher.

[Second Operator *gets coat and exits doors up* R. C. *putting coat on as he goes, followed by the* Orderly *who came for him.—Business and click of instruments goes on.—Doors up* R. C. *are opened from the outside by a couple of young officers in showy and untarnished uniforms, who stand in most polite attitudes waiting for a lady to pass in.*—First Operator *very busy writing at table* R. C. *taking message from instrument* A.]

First Young Officer. Right this way, Miss Mitford!

Second Young Officer. Allow me, Miss Mitford! *This* is the Department Telegraph office!

[*Enter at the doors up* R. C. Caroline Mitford.—*The young officers follow her in.*—Martha *enters after the officers, and waits near door well up stage*]

Caroline. [*Coming down* C. *as she comes in. Speaks in rather subdued manner and without vivacity, as if her mind were upon what she came for*] Thank you!

First Young Officer. [*On her* L.] I 'm

afraid you've gone back on the Army, Miss Mitford!

[CAROLINE *looks at* FIRST YOUNG OFFICER]

CAROLINE. [C.] Gone where?

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER. [*On* CAROLINE'S R.] Seems like we ought to a' got a salute as you went by!

CAROLINE. Oh yes! [*Salutes in perfunctory and absent-minded manner and turns away glancing about room and moving down a step or two*] Good evening! [*Nodding to one of the* MESSENGERS *waiting up* L. C.]

SECOND MESSENGER. [*Touching cap and stepping quickly to* CAROLINE *to* L. *of* FIRST YOUNG OFFICER] Good evening, Miss Mitford! Could we do anything for you in the office to-night?

[FIRST MESSENGER *remains up near window*]

CAROLINE. I want to send a telegram!

[*The three officers stand looking at* CAROLINE *quieted for a moment by her serious tone*]

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER. I'm afraid you've been havin' bad news, Miss Mitford?

CAROLINE. [C.] No— [*Shaking her head*] No! I mean—not specially.

FIRST YOUNG OFFICER. [L. C.] Maybe some friend o' yours has gone down to the front!

CAROLINE. [*Beginning to be interested*] Well supposing he had—would you call that bad news?

FIRST YOUNG OFFICER. Well I did n't know as you'd exactly like to——

CAROLINE. Then let me tell you—as you did n't know—that *all* my friends go down to the front!

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER. I hope not *all* Miss Mitford!

CAROLINE. Yes—all! If they did n't they would n't *be* my friends!

FIRST YOUNG OFFICER. But some of us are obliged to stay back here to take care of you.

CAROLINE. Well there's altogether too many trying to take care of me! You're all discharged! [*Goes across to down* L.]

[THIRD MESSENGER *enters doors up* R. C. *and joins* FOURTH MESSENGER *up* L. C. *near upper window.—Officers fall back a little, looking rather foolish but entirely good-natured*]

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER. [C.] Well—if we're really discharged Miss Mitford, looks like we'd have to go!

FIRST YOUNG OFFICER. [L. C.] Yes—but we're mighty sorry to see you in such bad spirits Miss Mitford!

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER and SECOND MESSENGER. [L. C. *and* C.—*Murmuring nearly together*] Yes indeed we are, Miss Mitford!

CAROLINE. [*Turning on them at down* L.] Would you like to put me in real good spirits?

FIRST YOUNG OFFICER. Would we!

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER. You try us once!

SECOND MESSENGER. I reckon there ain't anything we'd like bettah!

CAROLINE. [L.] Then I'll tell you *just* how to do it! [*They listen eagerly*] Start out this very night and never stop till you get to where my friends are—lying in trenches and ditches and earthworks between us and the Yankee guns!

SECOND YOUNG OFFICER, FIRST YOUNG OFFICER, SECOND MESSENGER. [*Remonstrating*] But really, Miss—You don't mean—[*etc.*]

CAROLINE. Fight Yankees a few days and lie in ditches a few nights till those uniforms you've got on look like they'd been some *use* to somebody! If you're so mighty anxious to do something for me, *that's* what you can do! [*Turning away to* L.] It's the only thing I want!

[*The* YOUNG OFFICERS *stand rather discouraged an instant*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Business*] Ready here!

[THIRD MESSENGER *steps quickly down to* L. *of table* R. C.] Department! Commissary General's office! [THIRD MESSENGER *salutes, takes dispatch and exits doors up* R. C.—SECOND MESSENGER *returns to* FOURTH MESSENGER *during this, and stands with him near window up* L. C.]

[MESSENGER A. *enters quickly at doors up* R. C. *and comes down to* FIRST OPERATOR L. *of table* R. C. *handing him a dispatch and at once makes his exit again doors up* R. C.—FIRST *and* SECOND YOUNG OFFICERS *exit dejectedly at doors up* R. C. *after this* MESSENGER]

CAROLINE. [*Going across with determined air to* R. C. *near* FIRST OPERATOR *when she sees an opportunity*] Oh Lieutenant Foray! [*Accent on "Oh"*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Turns and rises quickly with half salute.*—CAROLINE *gives a little*

attempt at a military salute] Beg your pardon Miss! [*Gets his coat which is on chair or table near at* R. *and hastily starts to put it on*] I did n't know——

CAROLINE. [*Up* C. *a little*] No no—don't! I don't mind. You see—I came on *business!*

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Puts on coat*] Want to send something out?

CAROLINE. Yes! That 's it.—I mean I *do.*

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Going to her, crossing back of table* R. C.] 'Fraid we can't do anything for you here! This is the War Department Miss.

CAROLINE. I know that—but it 's the on'y way to send, an' I—[*Sudden loud click of instrument* B. *on table* R.—FIRST OPERATOR *turns and listens*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Crossing back of table* R. C.] Excuse me a minute, won't you? [*Going to lower instrument on table* R. *and answering. Writing down message, etc.*]

CAROLINE. Yes—I will. [*A trifle disconcerted, stands uneasily near* C.] [*Speaks absently while she watches him*] I 'll—excuse you—of co'se.

FIRST OPERATOR. Ready here! [SECOND MESSENGER *down quickly to* L. *of* FIRST OPERATOR *at table* R.] Department! Quick as you can—they 're waiting for it! [SECOND MESSENGER *takes dispatch —salutes and exits at door up* R. FIRST OPERATOR *rises and crosses to* CAROLINE *who is up* C.—*To* CAROLINE] Now what was it you wanted us to do Miss?

CAROLINE. [C.] Just to [*Short gasp*] to send a telegram.

FIRST OPERATOR. [R. C.] I reckon it 's private business?

CAROLINE. [*Looking at him with wide open eyes*] Ye—yes! It 's—private!—Oh yes —I should *say* so!

FIRST OPERATOR. Then you 'll have to get an order from some one in the department. [*Goes to back of table* R. C. *and picks up papers*]

CAROLINE. That 's what I thought [*taking out a paper*] so I got it. [*Hands it to* OPERATOR]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Glancing at paper*] Oh—Major Selwin!

CAROLINE. Yes—he—he 's one of my——

FIRST OPERATOR. It 's all right then! [*Instrument* B. *calls. Quickly picks up a small sheet of paper and a pen and places them on table* L. C. *near* CAROLINE *and pushes chair up with almost the same movement*] You can write it here Miss [*This is on upper side of telegraph table down* R. C.]

CAROLINE. Thank you. [*Sits at table—looks at small sheet of paper—picks out large sheet—smooths it out. She starts writing*]

[FIRST OPERATOR *returns to table at down* R. *and answers call and sits—writes hurriedly, taking down dispatch.*—CAROLINE *earnestly writing —pausing an instant to think once or twice and a nervous glance toward* FIRST OPERATOR.—FIRST OPERATOR *very busy.*—MARTHA *standing motionless up stage, waiting—her eyes fixed on the telegraph instruments.*—CAROLINE *bus. of start and drawing away suspiciously on loud click of instrument* A. *near her. Moves over to* L. *side of table, looking suspiciously at the instrument. Puts pen in mouth—gets ink on tongue—makes wry face. After writing she carefully folds up her despatch, and turns down a corner.*—FIRST OPERATOR *when nearly through, motions to* FOURTH MESSENGER *and speaks hurriedly*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Still writing*] Here! [FOURTH MESSENGER *comes down quickly* L. *of* FIRST OPERATOR *and business*] Department! Try to get it in before the President goes! [*Handing* FOURTH MESSENGER *dispatch.*—FOURTH MESSENGER *salutes and exits at doors up* R. C.—FIRST OPERATOR *rising, to* CAROLINE] Is that ready yet Miss?

CAROLINE. [*Rising, hesitating, getting* L. *of and a little above table* R. C.] Yes, but I—[*Finally starts to hand it up to him*] Of course you 've—[*Hesitates*] You 've got to *take* it!

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Near* CAROLINE *on her* R.—*A brief puzzled look at her*] Yes of course.

[*She hands him the dispatch.—He at once opens it*]

CAROLINE. [*Sharp scream*] Oh! [*Quickly seizes the paper out of his hand. They stand looking at one another a little* L. *of and above table* R. C.] Why I did n't tell you to *read* it!

FIRST OPERATOR. [*After look at her*] Well what did you want?

CAROLINE. I want you to *send* it!

FIRST OPERATOR. How am I going to send it if I don't read it?

CAROLINE. [*After looking at him in con-*

sternation] Do—you—mean—to—say——

FIRST OPERATOR. I've got to spell out every word! Did n't you know that?

CAROLINE. [*Sadly, and shaking her head from side to side*] Oh—I must have—but I—[CAROLINE *pauses trying to think what to do*]—you see——

FIRST OPERATOR. Would there be any harm in my——

CAROLINE. [*Turning on him with sudden vehemence*] Why I would n't have you see it for worlds! My gracious! [*She soon opens the dispatch and looks at it*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Good-naturedly*] Is it as bad as all that!

CAROLINE. Bad! It is n't bad at all! On'y—I only don't want it to get out all over the town—that 's all!

FIRST OPERATOR. It won't ever get out from this office Miss. [CAROLINE *looks steadfastly at* FIRST OPERATOR] We would n't be allowed to mention anything outside!

CAROLINE. [*A doubtful look at him*] You would n't!

FIRST OPERATOR. No Miss. All sorts of private stuff goes through here.

CAROLINE. [*With new hope*] Does it?

FIRST OPERATOR. Every day! Now if that 's anything important——

CAROLINE. [*Impulsively*] O yes—it 's [*Recovering herself*]—it is!

FIRST OPERATOR. Then I reckon you 'd better trust it to me.

[CAROLINE *looks at* OPERATOR *a moment*]

CAROLINE. Ye—yes—I reckon I had! [*She hesitatingly hands him her telegram*]

[FIRST OPERATOR *takes the paper and at once turns to the table* R. *as if to send it on instrument* B.]

CAROLINE. [*Quickly*] Oh stop! [FIRST OPERATOR *turns and looks at her from table down* R.] Wait till I— [*Turns and goes up stage toward door hurriedly*] I don't want to be here—while you *spell out every word!* Oh no—I could n't *stand* that!

[FIRST OPERATOR *stands good-naturedly waiting.*—CAROLINE *takes hold of* MARTHA *to start out of door with her.*—*Enter* EDDINGER—*a private in a gray uniform—at doors up* R. C.—CAROLINE *and* MARTHA *stand back out of his way.*—*He glances at them and at once goes down to* FIRST OPERATOR *on his* L., *salutes and hands him a written order and crosses in front of table* R. C. *to* L. C., *wheels and stands at attention facing* R.—FIRST OPERATOR *looks at the order, glances at* EDDINGER, *then at* CAROLINE.—CAROLINE *and* MARTHA *move as if to go out at doors up* R. C.]

FIRST OPERATOR. Wait a minute please! [CAROLINE *and* MARTHA *stop and turn toward* FIRST OPERATOR] Are you Miss Mitford?

CAROLINE. Yes—I 'm Miss Mitford!

FIRST OPERATOR. I don't understand this! Here 's an order just come in to hold back any dispatch you give us.

CAROLINE. [*After looking speechless at* FIRST OPERATOR *a moment*] Hold back any—hold back—

FIRST OPERATOR. Yes Miss. And that ain't the worst of it!

CAROLINE. Wh—what else is there? [*Comes down* C. *a little way looking at* FIRST OPERATOR *with wide open eyes.*—MARTHA *remains up near door up* R.]

FIRST OPERATOR. [R.] This man has orders to take it back with him.

[*There is a slight pause*]

CAROLINE. [C.] [*Rather weakly*] Take it back with him? [*Brief pause—then suddenly with great animation*] Take what back with him?

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Near table down* R.] Your dispatch Miss. [CAROLINE *simply opens mouth and slowly draws in her breath*] There must be some mistake, but that 's what the order says.

CAROLINE. [*With unnatural calmness*] And where does it say to take it back to?

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Looks at the order*] The name is Arrelsford! [*Brief pause*]

CAROLINE. The order is for that man—[*Indicating* EDDINGER L. C.] to take my dispatch back to Mr. Arrelsford?

FIRST OPERATOR. Yes Miss.

CAROLINE. An' does it say in there what I 'm to be doin' in the meantime?

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Shakes head*] No Miss.

CAROLINE. That 's too bad!

FIRST OPERATOR. I 'm right sorry this has occurred Miss, and—

CAROLINE. Oh—there is n't any occasion yet for your feeling sorry—because it has n't occurred! And besides that it is n't goin' to occur! [*Becoming excited*] When it does you can go aroun' bein' sorry all you like! Have you got the faintest idea that I 'm goin' to let him take my telegram away with him and

show it to that man! Do you suppose——

MARTHA. [*Coming forward a step from up* R. C. *near the door. Breaking in, in a voice like a siren*] No—*sir!* You ain't a goin' ter do it—you can be right sure you ain't!

FIRST OPERATOR. [R.] But what can I do Miss?

CAROLINE. [C.—*Advancing*] It's perfectly simple what you can do—you can either send it, or hand it back to me—that's what you can do!

MARTHA. [*Calling out from up* R. C.] Yes suh—that's the very best thing you can do! An' the sooner you do it the quicker it'll be done—I kin tell you that right now!

FIRST OPERATOR. But this man has come here with orders to——

CAROLINE. [*Going defiantly to* EDDINGER *and facing him*] Well this man can go straight back and report to Mr. Arrelsford that he was unable to carry out his orders! [*Defiant attitude toward* EDDINGER L. C.] That's what *he* can do!

MARTHA. [*From up* R. C.—*now thoroughly roused and coming to a sense of her responsibility*] Let 'im take it! Let 'im take it ef he wants to so pow'fle bad! Just let the other one there give it to 'im—an' then see 'im try an' git out through this do' with it! [*Standing solidly before door up* R. C. *with folded arms and ominously shaking head.* MARTHA *talks and mumbles on half to herself*] I want to see him go by! I'm just a' waitin' fur a sight o' him gittin' past dis do'! That's what I'm waitin' fur! [*Goes on talking half to herself, quieting down gradually*] I'd like to know what they s'pose it was I come aroun' yere for anyway—these men with their orders an' fussin' an'——

FIRST OPERATOR. [*When quiet is restored*] Miss Mitford, if I was to give this dispatch back to you now it would get me into a heap o' trouble.

CAROLINE. What kind of trouble?

FIRST OPERATOR. [R.] Might be prison—might be shot!

CAROLINE. You mean to say they might——

FIRST OPERATOR. Sure to do one or the other!

CAROLINE. Just for givin' me back my own writin'?

FIRST OPERATOR. That's all.

CAROLINE. [*After looking silently at* FIRST OPERATOR *a moment*] Then you'll have to keep it!

FIRST OPERATOR. [*After slight pause*] Thank you Miss Mitford!

CAROLINE. [*A sigh—reconciling herself to the situation*] Very well—that's understood! You don't give it back to me—an' you *can't* give it to him—so nobody's disobeying any orders at all! [*Turning up and getting a chair from up* C. *and bringing it forward*] And that's the way it stands! [*Banging chair down close to* EDDINGER *and directly between him and the* FIRST OPERATOR. *Then plumps herself down on the chair and facing* R., *looks entirely unconcerned*] I reckon I can stay here as long as he can! [*Half to herself*] I have n't got much to do!

FIRST OPERATOR. But Miss Mitford——

CAROLINE. Now there ain't any good o' talkin'! If you've got any telegraphin' to do you better do it. I won't disturb you!

[*Rapid steps heard in corridor outside up* R.—*Enter* MR. ARRELSFORD *doors up* R. C. *coming in hurriedly, somewhat flushed and excited. He looks hastily about, and goes at once down* R. C.]

ARRELSFORD. [R. C.] What's this! Did n't he get here in time?

FIRST OPERATOR. [R.] Are you Mr. Arrelsford?

ARRELSFORD. Yes. [*Sharp glance at* CAROLINE] Are you holding back a dispatch?

FIRST OPERATOR. Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. Why did n't he bring it?

FIRST OPERATOR. Well—Miss Mitford—[*Hesitates. A motion toward* CAROLINE]

ARRELSFORD. [*Comprehending*] Oh! [*Crosses back of* CAROLINE *and* EDDINGER *to* L.] Eddinger! [EDDINGER *wheels to* L. *facing him*] Report back to Corporal Matson. Tell him to send a surgeon to General Varney's house on Franklin Street. He's to attend to a Yankee prisoner there who was shot—if he is n't dead by this time! [*Moves over to* L. *as* EDDINGER *goes up.*—CAROLINE *turns and looks at* ARRELSFORD *on hearing cue "prisoner," rising at same time and pushing chair back up* C.—EDDINGER *salutes and exits quickly up* R. C., *going back of* CAROLINE.—ARRELSFORD *turns and starts toward* FIRST OPERATOR] Let me see what that dispatch—

[First Operator *stands* R. *with* Caroline's *dispatch in his hand.*—Caroline *steps quickly in front of* Arrelsford.—Arrelsford *stops in some surprise at* Caroline's *sudden move*]

Caroline. [*Facing* Arrelsford] I expect you think you're going to get my telegram an' read it?

Arrelsford. [L. C.] I certainly intend to do so!

Caroline. [C.] Well there's a great big disappointment loomin' up right in front of you!

Arrelsford. [*With suspicion*] So! You've been trying to send out something you don't want us to see!

Caroline. What if I have?

Arrelsford. Just this! You won't send it—and I'll see it! [*About to pass* Caroline] This is a case where—[Caroline *steps in front of* Arrelsford *again so that he has to stop*]

Caroline. This is a case where you ain't goin' to read my private writin'—[*Stands looking at him with blazing eyes*]

Arrelsford. Lieutenant—I have an order here putting me in charge! Bring that dispatch to me!

[First Operator *about to move toward* Arrelsford *with the dispatch when* Martha *steps down in front of him with ponderous tread and stands facing him*]

Martha. [R. C.—*Facing* R. *to* First Operator] Mistah Lieutenant can stay juss about whar he is! [*Brief pause*]

Arrelsford. [L. C.—*To* First Operator] Is that Miss Mitford's dispatch in your hand?

First Operator. [R.] Yes sir!

Arrelsford. Read it! [Caroline *turns with a gasp of horror.*—Martha *turns in slow anger.*—First Operator *stands surprised for an instant*] Read it out!

Caroline. You shan't do such a thing! You have no right to read a private telegram—[etc.]

Martha. [*Speaking with* Caroline] No sah! He ain't no business to read her letters—none whatsomever! [etc.]

Arrelsford. [*Angrily*] Silence! [Caroline *and* Martha *stop talking*] If you interfere any further with the business of this office I'll have you both put under arrest! [*To* First Operator] Read that dispatch!

[Caroline *gasps breathless at* Arrelsford—*then turns and buries her face on* Martha's *shoulder sobbing*]

First Operator. [*Reads with some difficulty*] "Forgive me—Wilfred—darling — please — forgive — me — and — I—will—help—you—all—I—can."

Arrelsford. That dispatch can't go! [*Turns and moves left a few steps*]

Caroline. [*Turning and facing* Arrelsford] That dispatch *can* go! An' that dispatch *will* go! [Arrelsford *turns and looks at* Caroline *from* L.—Martha *moves up on right side ready to exit, standing well up* C. *and turning toward* Arrelsford] I know someone whose orders even *you* are bound to respect and someone who'll come here with me an' see that you *do* it!

Arrelsford. [L.] I can show good and sufficient reasons for what I do!

Caroline. [C.] Well you'll have to show good and sufficienter reasons than you've shown to me—I can tell you *that* Mr. Arrelsford!

Arrelsford. I give my reasons to my *superiors* Miss Mitford!

Caroline. Then you'll have to go 'round givin' 'em to everybody in *Richmond,* Mr. Arrelsford! [*Saying which* Caroline *makes a deep courtesy and turns and sweeps out through doors up* R. C. *followed in the same spirit by* Martha *who turns at the door and also makes a profound courtesy to* Arrelsford, *going off haughtily*]

[First Operator *sits down at table* R. C. *and begins to write.*—Arrelsford *looks after* Caroline *an instant and then goes rapidly over to* First Operator]

Arrelsford. Let me see that dispatch!

First Operator. [*Slight doubt*] You said you had an order sir?

Arrelsford. [*Impatiently*] Yes—yes! [*Throws order down on telegraph table*] Don't waste time!

[First Operator *picks up order and looks closely at it being careful to show no haste*]

First Operator. Department order sir?

Arrelsford. [*Assenting shortly*] Yes—yes!

First Operator. I suppose you're Mr. Arrelsford all right?

Arrelsford. Of course!

First Operator. We have to be pretty careful here. [*Hands him* Caroline's *telegram and goes on writing.*—Arrels-

FORD *takes* CAROLINE'S *telegram eagerly and reads it. Thinks an instant*]

ARRELSFORD. [C.] Did she seem nervous or excited when she handed this in?

FIRST OPERATOR. She certainly did!

ARRELSFORD. Anxious not to have it seen?

FIRST OPERATOR. Anxious! I should say so! She did n't want *me* to see it!

ARRELSFORD. We 've got a case on here and she 's mixed up in it!

FIRST OPERATOR. But that dispatch is to young Varney—the General's son!

ARRELSFORD. So much the worse if he 's mixed up in it. The lying scoundrel has made dupes of all of them—and this Mitford girl too!

FIRST OPERATOR. Who 's that sir?

ARRELSFORD. Well—no matter now. You 'll know before long! It 's one of the ugliest affairs we ever had! I had them put me on it and I 've got it down pretty close! [*Going across to* L. C.] We 'll end it right here in this office inside of thirty minutes!

[*Enter a* PRIVATE *at doors up* R. C.—*He comes down at once to* ARRELSFORD]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*To* PRIVATE] Well what is it?

PRIVATE. [L. C.—R. *of* ARRELSFORD] The lady 's here sir!

ARRELSFORD. Where is she?

PRIVATE. Waiting down below—at the front entrance.

ARRELSFORD. Did she come alone?

PRIVATE. Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. Show her the way up. [PRIVATE *salutes and exits at door up* R. —ARRELSFORD *comes* C. *to* FIRST OPERATOR] I suppose you 've got a revolver there? [FIRST OPERATOR *brings up revolver in matter-of-fact way from shelf beneath table with left hand and lays it on table at his left without looking up at* ARRELSFORD—*and scarcely interrupting his writing*] I 'd rather handle this thing myself—but I might call on you. Be ready—that 's all!

FIRST OPERATOR. Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. Obey any orders you get an' send out all dispatches unless I stop you.

FIRST OPERATOR. Very well sir. [*Soon puts revolver back on shelf beneath table*]

[*Doors up* R. C. *are opening by the* PRIVATE *last on, and* EDITH *is shown in.*—ARRELSFORD *meets her.*—*The* PRIVATE *exits at doors up* R. C.—EDITH *stops a little way down from doors and looks at* ARRELSFORD. *She is slightly breathless—not from exertion but owing to the situation*]

EDITH. I—I accepted your invitation Mr. Arrelsford!

ARRELSFORD. [*Up* C.] I 'm greatly obliged Miss Varney! As a matter of justice to me it was—

EDITH. [*Interrupting*] I did n't come here to oblige you! I came to see—I came to see that no more—[*A slight break before she can speak the word*] murders are committed in order to satisfy your singular curiosity. [*After brief pause; moves down* C.]

[ARRELSFORD *waits until* EDITH *is down* C. *and then goes down near her on her left*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Is the man dead?

EDITH. [*Turning and looking at* ARRELSFORD *steadily*] The man is dead.

[ARRELSFORD *stands a few seconds looking at* EDITH—*then turns front slowly. Turns to her again*]

ARRELSFORD. [*With cutting emphasis but low voice*] It 's a curious thing Miss Varney that a Yankee prisoner more or less should make so much difference to you! They 're dying down in Libby by the hundreds!

EDITH. At least they 're not killed in our houses—before our very eyes! [*Turns and moves up* C.]

[*Enter an* ORDERLY *who is a Special Agent of the War Department, at doors up* R. C. *He comes quickly in and crosses to* ARRELSFORD L. C. *Glances round toward* FIRST OPERATOR *and quickly back to* ARRELSFORD]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Low voice*] Where is he? Have you kept track of him?

ORDERLY. [L. C.—*Low voice*] He 's coming up Fourth Street sir!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Where has he been?

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] To his quarters on Cary Street. We got in the next room and watched him through a transom.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] What was he doing? What was it?

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] Working at some papers or documents.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] Could you see them? Could you see what it was?

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] Headings looked like orders from the War Department.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] He's coming in here with forged orders!

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] His game is to get control of these wires and then send out dispatches to the front that'll take away a battery or division from some vital point!

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] Looks like it sir.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] And that vital point is what the Yankees mean by "Plan Three!" That's where they'll hit us. [*Glances round quickly considering. Goes up* L. *to above line of middle window. Turns to* ORDERLY] Is there a guard in this building?

ORDERLY. [*Going up near* ARRELSFORD *on his* R.—*Low voice*] Not inside—there's a guard in front and sentries around the barracks over in the square.

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] They could hear me from this window, could n't they?

ORDERLY. [*Low voice*] The *guard* could hear you sir. [*A glance toward doors* R. C.] He must be nearly here by this time—you'd better look out!

EDITH. [*Up* C.—*Low voice*] Where shall I go?

ARRELSFORD. [*Up* L.—*Low voice*] Outside here on the balcony—I'll be with you!

EDITH. [*Low voice*] But—if he comes to the window! He may come here and look out!

ARRELSFORD. [*Low voice*] We'll go along to the next window and step in there—out of sight. [*To* ORDERLY] See if the window of the Commissary-General's office is open.

[ORDERLY *crosses* ARRELSFORD *and steps quickly out of windows up* L. *through middle window, and goes off along balcony to* L. *He returns at once, re-entering through middle window*]

ORDERLY. The next window's open sir.

ARRELSFORD. That's all I want of you—report back to Corporal Matson. Tell him to get the body of that prisoner out of the Varney house—he knows where it's to go!

ORDERLY. Very well sir! [*Salutes, crosses and exits doors up* R. C.]

ARRELSFORD. [*To* EDITH] This way please. [*Conducts* EDITH *out through middle window to the balcony up* L.—*She exits to* L.—ARRELSFORD *is closing the window to follow when he sees a* MESSENGER *enter at doors up* R. C., *and thereupon he stops just in the window keeping out of sight of* MESSENGER *behind window frame*]

[*Enter* FIRST MESSENGER *at doors up* R.C.—*He takes his position up stage waiting for messages as before.*—ARRELSFORD *eyes him sharply an instant—then comes into the room a step or two*]

ARRELSFORD. [*From near window up* L.] Where did you come from?

FIRST MESSENGER. [*Up* C.] War Department sir.

ARRELSFORD. Carrying dispatches?

FIRST MESSENGER. Yes sir.

ARRELSFORD. You know me don't you?

FIRST MESSENGER. I've seen you at the office sir.

ARRELSFORD. I'm here on Department business. All you've got to do is to keep quiet about it! [*Exit* ARRELSFORD *at middle window up* L., *which he closes after him, and then disappears from view along balcony to* L.]

[*Enter* SECOND MESSENGER *at door up* R. C.—*He takes his place at up* L. C. *with* FIRST MESSENGER.—FIRST OPERATOR *busy at table* R. C.—*A moment's wait.*—*Enter* CAPTAIN THORNE *at doors up* R. C. *As he comes down he gives one quick glance about the room but almost instantly to front again, so that it would hardly be noticed. He wears cap and carries an order in his belt. Goes down at once to* L. *of table* R. C. *and faces* FIRST OPERATOR]

[FIRST OPERATOR *on seeing* THORNE *rises with off hand salute*]

THORNE. [*Saluting*] Lieutenant! [*Hands* FIRST OPERATOR *the order which he carried in his belt*]

[FIRST OPERATOR *takes the order, opens and looks at it*]

FIRST OPERATOR. Order from the Department. [*Moves* R. *a little looking closely at the order*]

THORNE. [*Motionless, facing to* R.] I believe so. [*A quick glance at doors up* R. C. *as* OPERATOR *is looking at the order*]

FIRST OPERATOR. They want me to take a cipher dispatch ovah to the President's house.

THORNE. [*Moving to take* FIRST OPERATOR'S *place at table—pulls chair back a little and tosses cap over on table* R.] Yes—I'm ordered on here till you get back. [*Goes to place back of table* R. C.

and stands arranging things on the table]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*At table* R. *looking front*] That's an odd thing. They told me the President was down here with the Cabinet! He must have just now gone home I reckon.

THORNE. [*Standing at table* R. C. *and arranging papers, etc.*] Looks like it. If he is n't there you 'd better wait. [*Looking through a bunch of dispatches as he speaks*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Gets his cap from table* R. *and puts it on.—At table* R.] Yes—I 'll wait! [*Pause*] You 'll have to look out for Allison's wires, Cap'n—he was called ovah to the Department.

[THORNE *stops and eyes to front an instant on mention of* ALLISON]

THORNE. [*Easy manner again*] Ah ha—Allison.

FIRST OPERATOR. Yes.

THORNE. Be gone long? [THORNE *business of throwing used sheets in waste-basket and arranging a couple of large envelopes ready for quick use*]

FIRST OPERATOR. Well, you know how it is—they generally whip around quite a while before they make up their minds what they want to do. I don't expect they 'll trouble you much! It 's as quiet as a church down the river. [*Starting up toward doors up* R. C.]

THORNE. [*Seeing a cigar on the table near instrument*] See here—wait a minute—you 'd better not walk out and leave a—[FIRST OPERATOR *stops and turns back to* THORNE *coming* C. *a little*] O well—no matter—it 's none of my business! [*Tapping with the end of a long envelope on table where the cigar is*] Still, if you want some good advice, that 's a dangerous thing to do!

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Coming down nearer on* L.] Why what is it Cap'n?

THORNE. That!—[*Striking at cigar with envelope*] Leave a cigar lying around this office like that! [*Picks it up with* L. *hand and lights a match with* R.] Anybody might walk in here any minute and take it away! [*About to light cigar*] I can't watch your cigars all day—[*Lighting cigar*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Grinning*] Oh!—Help yourself Cap'n!

THORNE. [*Suddenly snatching cigar out of mouth with* L. *hand and looking at it*] What 's the matter with it?—Oh well—I 'll take a chance. [*Puts it in his mouth and resumes lighting*]

[FIRST OPERATOR *hesitates a moment, then goes nearer to* THORNE *on his* L., L. *of table* R. C.]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Low voice*] Oh Cap'n—if there 's any trouble around here you 'll find a revolver under there. [*Indicating shelf under table.*—THORNE *stops lighting cigar an instant, letting match blaze in his hand—eyes motionless to front*]

THORNE. [*At once resuming nonchalance—finishing lighting cigar*] What about that? What makes you think—[*Pulling in to light cigar*] there 's going to be trouble?

FIRST OPERATOR. Oh well, there might be!

THORNE. [*Tossing match away*] Been having a dream?

FIRST OPERATOR. Oh no—but you never can tell! [*Starts up toward doors up* R. C.]

THORNE. [*Cigar in mouth.—Going at papers again*] That 's right! You never can tell. [*A thought*] But see here—hold on a minute! [*Reaching down and getting revolver from shelf and tossing it on table near* L. *end*] If you never can tell you 'd better take that along with you. I 've got one of my own. [*Rather sotto voce*] I can tell!

[*Click of instrument* A.—THORNE *answers on instrument* A. *at* R. *end of table* R. C. *and slides into chair*]

FIRST OPERATOR. Well, if you 've got one here, I might as well. [*Takes revolver*] Look out for yourself Cap'n! [*Goes up.—Instrument* A. *begins clicking off a message.*—THORNE *sits at table* R. C. *listening and ready to take down what comes*]

THORNE. [*Listening to instrument at* R.] Same to you old man—and many happy returns of the day! [*Exit* FIRST OPERATOR *doors up* R. C.—THORNE *writes message and briefly addresses a long envelope.—Instrument* A. *stops receiving as* THORNE *addresses envelope.*—THORNE O. K.'s *dispatch and puts it in envelope which he quickly seals*] Ready here! [FIRST MESSENGER *down to* THORNE *and salutes* L. *of table* R. C.] Quartermaster-General. [*Handing dispatch to* MESSENGER]

FIRST MESSENGER. Not at his office sir!

THORNE. Find him—he 's got to have it!

FIRST MESSENGER. Very well sir! [*Salutes and exits quickly up* R.]

[*Brief pause. Silence. No instruments clicking.*—THORNE *eyes front. After a moment he turns slowly* L.

looking to see if there is a MESSENGER *there. Sees there is one without looking entirely around.—A second's wait.—Instrument* C. *at upper end of table* R. *begins to click.—*THORNE *rises and going to instrument* C. *answers call—drops into chair* R.*—writes message—puts it in envelope —and O. K.'s call, etc.*]

THORNE. Ready here! [SECOND MESSENGER *goes quickly across to* L. *of table* R. C. *and salutes*] Secretary of the Treasury —marked private.—Take it to his house. [*Begins to read a dispatch he twitched off from a file*]

SECOND MESSENGER. He's down yere at the cabinet sir.

THORNE. Take it to his house and wait till he comes!

[SECOND MESSENGER *salutes and exits doors up* R. C. *closing them after him. —On the slam of doors after exit of* MESSENGER, THORNE *crushes dispatch in his right hand and throws it to floor—and wheels front—his eyes on the instrument down* R. C.*— all one quick movement. Then he rises and with cat-like swiftness springs to the doors up* R. C. *and listens—opens one of the doors a little and looks off. He closes it quickly, turning and moving swiftly to* C., *and opens the door to cupboard up* C. *glancing in, then moves to the windows up* L. C. *Pushes the window up* L. *open a little and looks off to balcony, beginning at same time to unbuckle belt and unbutton coat. Turns and moves down toward the telegraph table* R. C. *at same time throwing belt over to* R. *above* R. *table, and taking off coat. Glances back up* L.*—looks to see that a document is in breast pocket of coat—letting audience see that it is there—and lays coat over back of chair above table* R. C. *with document in sight so that he can get it without delay. Takes revolver from right hip pocket and quickly but quietly lays it on the table* R. C. *just to right of instrument* A. *and then seizes key of that instrument and gives a certain call:* (—.... .. ..) *Waits. A glance rapidly to left. He is standing at table—cigar in mouth. Makes the call again:* (—.... .. ..) *Waits again. Gives the call third time:* (—.... .. ..) *Goes to lower end of table* R. *and half sits on it, folding arms, eyes on instrument, chewing cigar, with a glance or two up stage, but his eyes back quickly to instrument. Slides off table—takes cigar out of his mouth with* L. *hand and gives the call again with right:* (—.... .. ..) *Puts cigar in mouth again and turning and walking toward up* L. C. *looking about. Soon he carelessly throws some scraps of torn paper—which he took from* R. *pocket—off up stage. Just as he throws papers—facing to* L.*—the call is answered:* (—.... .. ..) THORNE *is back at the table* R. C. *in an instant and telegraphing rapidly—cigar in mouth.— When he has sent for about five seconds, steps are heard in corridor outside up* R.*—*THORNE *quickly strikes a match—which is close at hand to* R. *of instrument—and sinks into the chair, appearing to be lazily lighting his cigar as a* MESSENGER *comes in at door up* R. C.]

[FOURTH MESSENGER *enters as soon as he hears match strike, at doors up* R. C. *He goes down at once to* L. *of table* R. C. *with a dispatch, which he extends toward* THORNE *as he salutes*]

FOURTH MESSENGER. Secretary of War, Cap'n! Wants to go out right now! [THORNE *tosses away match, takes dispatch and opens it.* FOURTH MESSENGER *salutes, turns and starts up toward doors up* R. C.]

THORNE. Here! Here! What's all this! [*Looking at the dispatch.—*FOURTH MESSENGER *returns to* THORNE*—salutes*] Is that the Secretary's signature? [*Indicating a place on the dispatch which he holds in his hand*]

FOURTH MESSENGER. Yes sir—I saw him sign it.

[THORNE *looks closely at the signature. Turns it so as to get gas light from* R. *Turns and looks sharply at the* MESSENGER]

THORNE. [*Writing*] Saw him sign it did you?

FOURTH MESSENGER. Yes sir.

[THORNE *turns and laying dispatch on table begins to O. K. it*]

THORNE. [*Writing*] Got to be a little careful to-night!

FOURTH MESSENGER. I can swear to that

one sir. [*Salutes—turns and goes up and exits at doors up* R. C.]

[THORNE *listens—faced front—for exit of* MESSENGER, *the dispatch in his left hand. Instantly on slam of doors up* L. C. *he puts cigar down at end of table, rises, laying the dispatch down flat on table. Quickly folds and very dexterously and rapidly cuts off the lower part of the paper—which has the signature of the Secretary of War upon it—with a paper knife, and holds it between his teeth while he tears the rest of the order in pieces, which he is on the point of throwing into waste-basket at* L. *of table, when he stops and changes his mind, stuffing the torn-up dispatch into his* R. *hand trousers pocket. Picks up coat from back of chair and takes the document out of inside breast pocket. Opens it out on table and quickly pastes to it the piece of the real order bearing the signature, wipes quickly with handkerchief, puts handkerchief back into* R. *trousers pocket, picks up cigar which he laid down on table and puts it in mouth, at same time sitting and at once beginning to telegraph rapidly on instrument* A.—THORNE *intent, yet vigilant.—During business of* THORNE *pasting dispatch,* ARRELSFORD *appears outside windows up* L. *on balcony at side of columns. He motions off toward* L.—EDITH *comes into view there also.—*ARRELSFORD *points toward* THORNE, *calling her attention to what he is doing.—They stand at the window watching* THORNE—*the strong moonlight bringing them out sharply.—After a few seconds* ARRELSFORD *accidentally makes a slight noise with latch of window.—Instantly on this faint click of latch* THORNE *stops telegraphing and sits absolutely motionless—his eyes front.—*ARRELSFORD *and* EDITH *disappear instantly and noiselessly on balcony to* L.—*Dead silence.—After a motionless pause,* THORNE *begins to fumble among papers on the table with his left hand, soon after raising the dispatch or some other paper with that hand in such a way that it will screen his right hand and the telegraph instrument on the key of which it rests, from an observer on the left. While he appears to be scanning this paper or dispatch with the greatest attention, his right hand slowly slips off the telegraph key and toward his revolver which lies just to the right of the instrument. Reaching it, he very slowly moves it over the right edge of the table, and down against his right leg. He then begins to push things about on the table with his left hand as if looking for something, and soon rises as if not able to find it, and looks still more carefully, keeping the revolver close against his right leg, out of sight from windows up left. He looks about on table, glances over to table on right as if looking for what he wanted there, puts cigar down on table before him—after about to do so once and taking a final puff—and steps over to table at* R. *still looking for something and now—as he turns right—shifting revolver around in front of him. As he looks about among papers on table* R. *he raises* L. *hand carelessly to the cock of the gas bracket and suddenly shuts off light.—Stage dark.—Instantly on lights off,* THORNE *drops on one knee behind (that is to* R. *of) table* R. C.—*facing toward* L. *and revolver—with table for a rest—covering windows up* L.—*Light from windows up* L. *gauged to strike across to* THORNE *at table with revolver.—After holding it a short time, he begins slowly to edge up stage first seizing chair with his coat on it, and crouching behind it—then moving up from that crouched with revolver ready and eyes on windows up* L. *until within reach of doors up* L. C. *Reaching behind him—without taking eyes or revolver off windows up* L. *he finds big heavy bolt and suddenly slides it thus locking the doors on the inside. From doors up* R. C. THORNE *glides with a dash—throwing aside the chair in the way—at the door of cupboard up* C. *which opens down stage and hinges on its* L. *side. With motion of reaching it he has it open—if not already open—and pushes it along before him as he moves left toward window.—When moving slowly behind this door with his eyes and revolver on*

window, the telegraph instrument down R. C. *suddenly gives two or three sharp clicks.*—THORNE *makes an instantaneous turn front covering the instrument with revolver. Seeing what it was he turns left again. Just as he gets door nearly wide open against wall at back he dashes at the upper window up left and bangs it open with his left hand covering all outside with revolver in his right. In an instant he sees that no one is there, and straightens up—looking. He makes a quick spring past first window stopping close behind the upright between first and second windows, and at same time banging these windows open and covering with revolver. Sees no one. Looks this way and that. Makes quick dash outside and covers over balustrade—as if someone might be below. In again quick. Looks about with one or two quick glances. Concludes he must have been mistaken, and starts down toward table* R. C. *Stops after going two or three steps and looks back. Turns and goes rapidly down to table. Picks up cigar with left hand. Puts revolver at right end of table with right hand, and gets a match with that hand. Stands an instant looking left. Strikes match and is about to relight cigar. Pause—eyes front. Match burning. Listening. Looks* L. *Lights cigar. As he is lighting cigar thinks of gas being out, and stepping to right, turns it on and lights it with match he used for cigar.—Lights full on.*—THORNE *turns quickly, looking left as lights on. Then steps at once—after glancing quickly about room—to telegraph table, puts down cigar near upper* R. *corner of table with* L. *hand and begins to telegraph with* L. *hand, facing front.—Sudden sharp report of revolver outside through lower window, up* L. *with crash of glass, and on it* ARRELSFORD *springs on at middle window* L. *with revolver in his hand.* THORNE *does not move on shot except quick recoil from instrument, leaning back a little, expression of pain an instant. His* L. *hand—with which he was telegraphing—is covered with blood. He stands motionless an instant. Eyes then down toward his own revolver. Slight pause. He makes a sudden plunge for it getting it in his* R. *hand. At same instant quick turn on* ARRELSFORD *but before he can raise the weapon* ARRELSFORD *covers him with revolver and* THORNE *stops where he is, holding position*]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Covering* THORNE] Drop it! [*Pause*] Drop that gun or you're a dead man! Drop it I say! [*A moment's pause.*—THORNE *gradually recovers to erect position, looking easily front, and puts revolver on the table, picking up cigar with same hand and putting it casually into his mouth as if he thought he'd have a smoke after all, instead of killing a man. He then gets handkerchief out of pocket with* R. *hand and gets hold of a corner of it not using his* L.—ARRELSFORD *advances a step or two, lowering revolver, but holding it ready*] Do you know why I did n't kill you like a dog just now?

THORNE. [*Low voice—as he twists handkerchief around his wounded hand*] Because you're such a damn bad shot.

ARRELSFORD. Maybe you'll change your mind about that!

THORNE. [*Speaks easily and pleasantly*] Well I hope so I'm sure. It is n't pleasant to be riddled up this way you know!

ARRELSFORD. Next time you'll be riddled somewhere else besides the hand! There's only one reason why you're not lying there now with a bullet through your head!

THORNE. Only one eh?

ARRELSFORD. Only one!

THORNE. [*Still fixing hand and sleeve*] Do I hear it?

ARRELSFORD. Simply because I gave my word of honor to someone outside there that I would n't kill you now!

[THORNE *on hearing "Someone outside there" turns and looks at* ARRELSFORD *with interest*]

THORNE. [*Taking cigar out of mouth and holding it in* R. *hand as he moves toward* ARRELSFORD] Ah! Then it is n't a pleasant little tête-à-tête between ourselves! You have someone with you! [*Stopping near* C. *coolly facing* ARRELSFORD]

ARRELSFORD. [*Sarcastically*] I *have* someone with me Captain Thorne! Someone who takes quite an interest in what you're doing to-night!

THORNE. Quite an interest, eh! That's

kind I'm sure. [*Knocking the ashes from his cigar with a finger of right hand*] Is the gentleman going to stay out there all alone on the cold balcony, or shall I have the pleasure [*Enter* EDITH *from balcony up* L. *through the upper window, where she stands supporting herself by the sides. She is looking toward* R. *as if intending to go, but not able for a moment, to move. Avoids looking at* THORNE] of inviting him in here and having a charming little three-handed—[*Glancing toward* L. *he sees* EDITH *and stops motionless with eyes toward left. After a moment he turns front and holds position*]

EDITH. [*Does not speak until after* THORNE *looks front.—Low voice*] I'll go, Mr. Arrelsford!

ARRELSFORD. Not yet Miss Varney!

EDITH. [*Coming blindly into the room a few steps as if to get across to the doors up* R. C.] I don't wish to stay—any longer! [*Moves toward* R.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Down* L. C.] One moment please! We need you!

EDITH. [*Stopping up* C.] For what?

ARRELSFORD. A witness.

EDITH. You can send for me. I'll be at home. [*About to start toward door*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Sharply*] I'll have to detain you till I turn him over to the guard—it won't take a moment! [*Steps to the middle window up* L. *still keeping an eye on* THORNE, *and calls off in loud voice*] Corporal o' the guard! Corporal o' the guard! Send up the guard will you?

[EDITH *shrinks back up* C. *not knowing what to do*]

VOICE. [*Outside* L. *in distance—as if down below in the street*] What's the matter up there! Who's calling the guard!

ARRELSFORD. [*At window*] Up here! Department Telegraph! Send 'em up quick!

VOICES. [*Outside* L. *in distance as before*] Corporal of the Guard Post Four! [*Repeated more distant*] Corporal of the Guard Post Four! [*Repeated again almost inaudible*] Corporal of the Guard Post Four! Fall in the guard! Fall in! [*These orders gruff—indistinct—distant. Give effect of quick gruff shouts of orders barely audible. If* VOICES *seem close at hand it will be disastrous*]

EDITH. [*Up* C.—*Turning suddenly upon* ARRELSFORD] I'm going Mr. Arrelsford—I don't *wish* to be a witness!

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*After an instant's look at* EDITH—*suspecting the reason for her refusal*] Whatever your *feelings* may be Miss Varney, we can't permit you to refuse!

EDITH. [*With determination*] I do refuse! If you won't take me down to the street I'll find the way out myself! [*Stops as she is turning to go, on hearing the* GUARD *outside*]

[*Sound of* GUARD *outside running through lower corridors. Tramp of men coming up stairway and along hallways outside up* R.—THORNE *holds position looking steadily front, cigar in right hand*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Loud voice to stop* EDITH] You can't get out—the guard is here! [*Steps down* L. C. *with revolver, his eyes on* THORNE]

[EDITH *stands an instant and then as the* GUARD *is heard nearer in the corridor outside up* R. *she moves up to window up* L. *and remains there until sound of* GUARD *breaking in the door. Then she makes her exit off to* L. *on balcony, disappearing so as to attract no attention*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Shouting across to* THORNE *above noise of* GUARD] I've got you about where I want you at last! [THORNE *motionless.—Sound of hurried tread of men outside up* R. *as if coming on double quick toward the doors on the bare floor of corridor*] You thought you was almighty smart—but you'll find we can match your tricks every time!

[*Sound of the* GUARD *coming outside up* R. *suddenly ceases close to the doors up* R. C.]

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Close outside door up* R.] What's the matter here! Let us in!

THORNE. [*Loud, incisive voice. Still facing front*] Break down the door Sergeant! Break it down! [*As he calls he begins to back up stage toward up* R.]

[*Officers and men outside at once begin to smash in the door with the butts of their muskets*]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Surprised*] What are you saying about it!

THORNE. [*Up* R. C.] You want 'im in here don't you!

[ARRELSFORD *moves up a little as* THORNE *does, and covers him with revolver*]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Through noise of smashing door*] Stand where you are!

[THORNE *has backed up* R. C. *until*

nearly between ARRELSFORD *and the door, so that the latter cannot fire on him without hitting others. But he must stand a trifle to right of line the men will take in rushing across to* ARRELSFORD]

THORNE. [*Up* R. C. *facing* ARRELSFORD] Smash in the door! What are you waiting for! Smash it in Sergeant! [*Keeps up this call till doors break down and men rush in.—Doors are quickly battered in and* SERGEANT *and men dash through and into the room.—*THORNE, *continuing without break from last speech, above all the noise, pointing to* ARRELSFORD *with* L. *hand*] Arrest that man! [SERGEANT OF THE GUARD *and six men spring forward past* THORNE *and seize* ARRELSFORD *before he can recover from his astonishment, throwing him backward to* L. *and nearly down in the first struggle, but pulling him to his feet and holding him fast.—As soon as quiet* THORNE *moves down* C.] He's got in here with a revolver and he's playing Hell with it!

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.] Sergeant—my orders are—

THORNE. [*At* C. *facing* ARRELSFORD] Damn your orders! You haven't got orders to shoot everybody you see in this office! [ARRELSFORD *makes a sudden effort to break loose*] Get his gun away—he'll hurt himself! [*Turns* R. *at once and goes to table* R. C. *putting his coat in better position on back of chair, and then getting things in shape on the table, at same time putting cigar back in mouth and smoking.—*SERGEANT *and men twist the revolver out of* ARRELSFORD'S *hands*]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Continuing to struggle and protest*] Listen to me! Arrest him! He's sending out a false——

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [L. C.] Now that'll do! [*Silencing* ARRELSFORD *roughly by hand across his mouth.—To* THORNE] What's it all about, Cap'n?

THORNE. [*Standing at table* R.C. *arranging things*] All about! I haven't got the slightest—[*Sudden snatch of cigar out of mouth with* R. *hand and then to* SERGEANT *as if remembering something*] He says he came out of some office! Sending out dispatches here he began letting off his gun at me. [*Turns back arranging things on table*] Crazy lunatic!

ARRELSFORD. [*Struggling to speak*] It's a lie! Let me speak—I'm from the—

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Quietly to avoid laugh*] Here! That'll do now! [*Silencing* ARRELSFORD. *To* THORNE] What shall we do with him?

THORNE. [*Tossing things into place on table with one hand*] I don't care a damn—get him out o' here—that's all I want!

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. Much hurt Cap'n?

THORNE. [*Carelessly*] Oh no—did one hand up a little—I can get along with the other all right. [*Sits at table and begins telegraphing*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Struggling desperately*] Stop him! He's sending a—Wait! Ask Miss Varney! She saw him! Ask her! Ask Miss Varney! [*Speaks wildly—losing all control of himself*]

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Breaking in on* ARRELSFORD] Here! Fall in there! We'll get him out. [*The guard quickly falls in behind* ARRELSFORD, *who is still struggling*] Forward——

[*Enter an* OFFICER *striding in quickly at doors up* R.]

OFFICER. [*Loud voice—above the noise*] Halt! The General! [OFFICER *remains up stage standing* L. *of doors up* R.]

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*To* MEN] Halt! [MEN *on motion from* SERGEANT *stand back, forming a double rank behind* ARRELSFORD, *two men holding him in front rank.—All facing to center.* SERGEANT *up* L. C.]

[*Enter* MAJOR GENERAL HARRISON RANDOLPH *striding in at doors up* R. C.—CAROLINE *comes to doors after the* GENERAL, *and stands just within, up* R. C.—ARRELSFORD *has been so astonished and indignant at his treatment that he can't find his voice at first.—*OFFICERS *salute as* GENERAL RANDOLPH *comes in.—*THORNE *goes on working instrument at table down* R. C. *cigar between his teeth. He has the dispatch with signature pasted on it, spread on table before him*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Comes down* C. *and stops*] What's all this about refusing to send Miss Mitford's telegram! Is it some of your work, Arrelsford?

ARRELSFORD. [*Breathless, violent, excited*] General!—They've arrested me!—A conspiracy!—A—[*Sees* THORNE *working at telegraph instrument*] Stop that man—for God's sake stop him before it's too late!

[CAROLINE *edging gradually up* R. C.

quietly slips out at doors up R. C. *Make this exit unnoticed if possible*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [C.] Stop him! What do you mean?

THORNE. [*Rising quickly with salute—timed to speak on cue*] He means me sir! He's got an idea some dispatch I'm sending out is a trick of the Yankees!

ARRELSFORD. [*Excitedly*] It's a conspiracy. He's an impostor—a—a——

THORNE. [*Subdued voice*] Why the man must have gone crazy General! [THORNE *stands facing* L. *motionless*]

ARRELSFORD. I came here on a case for——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Sharply*] Wait!—I'll get at this! [*To* SERGEANT—*without turning to him*] What was he doing?

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Up* L. C. *saluting*] He was firing on the Cap'n sir.

ARRELSFORD. He was sending out a false order to weaken our lines at Cemetery Hill and I—Ah! [*Suddenly recollecting*] Miss Varney! [*Looking excitedly about*] She was here—she saw it all!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Gruffly*] Miss Varney!

ARRELSFORD. Yes sir!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. The General's daughter?

ARRELSFORD. [*Nodding affirmatively with excited eagerness*] Yes sir!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. What was she doing here?

ARRELSFORD. She came to see for herself whether he was guilty or not!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Is this some personal matter of yours?

ARRELSFORD. He was a visitor at their house—I wanted her to know!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Where is she now? Where is Miss Varney?

ARRENSFORD. [*Looking about excitedly*] She must be out there on the balcony! Send for her! Send for her!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*After looking at* ARRELSFORD *in silence for a few seconds*] Sergeant! [SERGEANT *steps down* L. *of* GENERAL RANDOLPH *and salutes*] Step out there on the balcony. Present my compliments to Miss Varney and ask her to come in!

[SERGEANT *salutes and steps quickly out on the balcony through middle window up* L. *Walks off along balcony disappearing at* L. *Re-appears walking back as far as balcony goes. Turns and re-enters room, coming down* L. C. *and saluting*]

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Saluting*] No one there sir!

[THORNE *turns quietly and opening instrument* A. *begins to send dispatch, picking up the forged order with* L. *hand as if sending from that copy and telegraphing with* R.]

ARRELSFORD. She must be there! She's in the next office! The other window. Tell him to—[*Sees* THORNE *working at instrument* A.] Ah! [*Almost a scream*] Stop him! He's sending it now!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*To* THORNE] One moment Cap'n! [THORNE *stops. Salutes. Drops dispatch in left hand to table.—Pause for an instant—all holding their positions.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH *after above pause—to* ARRELSFORD] What have *you* got to do with this?

ARRELSFORD. It's a Department Case! They assigned it to me!

[THORNE *picks up the forged dispatch and examines it*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. What's a Department Case?

ARRELSFORD. The whole plot—to send the order—it's the Yankee Secret Service! His brother brought in the signal tonight!

[GENERAL RANDOLPH *looks sharply at* ARRELSFORD]

THORNE. [*Very quiet and matter-of-fact*] This ought to go out sir—it's very important.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Go ahead with it!

[THORNE *salutes and quickly turns to instrument* A. *dropping dispatch on table and begins sending rapidly as he stands before the table, glancing at the dispatch as he does so as if sending from it*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Seeing what is going on*] No no! It's a——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Silence!

ARRELSFORD. [*Excitedly*] Do you know what he's telling them!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. No!—Do you?

AREELSFORD. Yes! If you'll——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*To* THORNE] Wait! [THORNE *stops telegraphing, coming at once to salute, military position a step back from table facing front*] Where's that dispatch? [THORNE *goes to* GENERAL RANDOLPH *and hands him the dispatch with salute, then back a step.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH *takes the dispatch. To* ARRELSFORD] What was it? What has he been telling them? [*Looks at dispatch in his hand*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Excitedly*] He began to give an order to withdraw Marston's Division from its present position!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. That is perfectly correct.

ARRELSFORD. Yes—by that dispatch—but that dispatch is a forgery! [THORNE *with a look of surprise turns sharply toward* ARRELSFORD] It's an order to withdraw a whole division from a vital point! A false order! He wrote it himself! [THORNE *stands as if astounded*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Why should he write it? If he wanted to send out a false order he could do it without setting it down on paper could n't he?

ARRELSFORD. Yes—but if any of the operators came back they 'd catch him doing it! With that order and the Secretary's signature he could go right on! He could even order one of *them* to send it!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. How did he get the Secretary's signature?

ARRELSFORD. He tore it off from a genuine dispatch!—Why General—look at that dispatch in your hand! The Secretary's signature is *pasted on!* I saw him do it!

THORNE. [R. C.] Why—they often come that way! [*Turns away toward front*]

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.] He's a liar! They never do!

[THORNE *turns on "liar" and the two men glare at each other a moment*]

THORNE. [R. C.—*Recovering himself*] General, if you have any doubts about that dispatch send it back to the War Office and have it verified!

[ARRELSFORD *is so thunderstruck that he starts back a little unable to speak. Stands with his eyes riveted on* THORNE *until cue of telegraph click below*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Speaks slowly, his eyes on* THORNE] Quite a good idea! [*Brief pause*] Sergeant! [*Holding out the dispatch.*—SERGEANT OF THE GUARD *salutes and waits for orders*] Take this dispatch over to the Secretary's office and—[*Sudden loud click of telegraph instrument* A. *on table* R. C.—GENERAL RANDOLPH *stops—listening. To* THORNE] What 's that?

[ARRELSFORD *looking at the instrument.* THORNE *stands motionless excepting that he took his eyes off* ARRELSFORD *and looked across to down* L. *listening*]

THORNE. [*After slight wait*] Adjutant-General Chesney.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. From the front?

THORNE. Yes sir.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. What does he say?

[THORNE *turns and steps to the table and gives quick signal on instrument* A. *closing circuit to receive, and then stands erect listening—eyes toward front*]

THORNE. His compliments sir—[*Pause—Continued click of instrument*] He asks—[*Pause.—Continued click of instrument*] for the rest—[*Pause—continued click of instrument*] of that dispatch—[*Pause—continued click of instrument which then stops*] It 's of vital importance. [THORNE *stands motionless*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*After very slight pause abruptly turns and hands the dispatch back to* THORNE] Let him have it! [THORNE *hurried salute, takes dispatch—sits at table and begins sending*]

ARRELSFORD. General—if you——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Sharply to* ARRELSFORD] That 's enough! We 'll have you examined at headquarters! [*Hurried steps in corridor outside up* R. *and enter quickly at doors up* R. *the* FIRST OPERATOR. *He is breathless and excited*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Catching sight of* FIRST OPERATOR *as he comes in*] Ah! Thank God! There 's a witness! He was sent away on a forged order! Ask him! Ask him! [*Pause.*—FIRST OPERATOR *standing up stage* R. C. *looking at others surprised*—THORNE *telegraphing grimly and desperately*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*After instant's pause during which click of instrument is heard*] Wait a moment, Cap'n!

[THORNE *stops telegraphing, sits motionless, hand on the key, eyes straight front.—An instant of dead silence.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH *moves up* C. *a little to speak to* FIRST OPERATOR]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Up* C. *to* FIRST OPERATOR. *Gruffly*] Where did you come from?

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Up* R. C.—*Not understanding what is going on.—Salutes*] There was some mistake sir!

[ARRELSFORD *gives gasp of triumph quick on cue.—Brief pause of dead silence*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Mistake eh?—Who made it?

FIRST OPERATOR. I got an order to go to the President's house, and when I got there the President——!

THORNE. [*Rising at telegraph table, on cue "President's house"*] This delay will be disastrous sir! Permit me to go on—if there's any mistake we can rectify it afterwards! [*Turns to instrument and begins sending as he stands before it*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Cry of remonstrance*] No!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Who has not given heed to* THORNE'S *speech—to* FIRST OPERATOR] Where did you get the order?

ARRELSFORD. He's at it again sir!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Suddenly sees what* THORNE *is doing*] Halt there! [THORNE *stops telegraphing*] What are you doing! [*Stepping down* C.] I ordered you to wait!

THORNE. [*Turns* L. *to* GENERAL RANDOLPH] I was sent here to attend to the business of this office and that business is going on! [*Turning again as if to telegraph*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*His temper rising*] It is not going on sir, until I'm ready for it!

THORNE. [*Turning back to the* GENERAL] My orders come from the War Department—not from you! This dispatch came in half an hour ago—they're calling for it—and it's my business to send it out! [*Turning at end of speech and seizing the key endeavors to rush off the rest of the dispatch*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Halt! [THORNE *goes on telegraphing.—To* SERGEANT OF THE GUARD] Sergeant! [SERGEANT *salutes*] Hold that machine there! [*Pointing at telegraph instrument.—*SERGEANT OF THE GUARD *and two men spring quickly across to right.* SERGEANT *rushes against* THORNE *with arm across his breast forcing him over to* R. *against chair and table on right—chair a little away from table to emphasize with crash as* THORNE *is flung against it—and holds him there.—The two men cross bayonets over instrument and stand motionless. All done quickly, business-like and with as little disturbance as possible.* GENERAL RANDOLPH *strides down* C. *and speaks across to* THORNE] I'll have you court-martialed for this!

THORNE. [*Breaking loose from* SERGEANT *and coming down* R.] You'll answer yourself sir, for delaying a dispatch of vital importance!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Sharply*] Do you mean that!

THORNE. I mean that! And I demand that you let me proceed with the business of this office!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. By what authority do you send that dispatch?

THORNE. I refer you to the Department!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Show me your order for taking charge of this office!

THORNE. I refer you to the Department! [*Stands motionless facing across to* L.]

[EDITH *appears at upper window up* L. *coming on from balcony left, and moves a little into room up* L. C.—SERGEANT OF THE GUARD *remains at* R. *above table when* THORNE *breaks away from him*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. By God then I'll *go* to the Department! [*Swings round and strides up* C. *a little way*] Sergeant! [SERGEANT OF THE GUARD *salutes*] Leave your men on guard there and go over to the War Office—my compliments to the Secretary and will he be so good as to——

ARRELSFORD. [*Suddenly breaking out on seeing* EDITH *up* L. C.] Ah! General! [*Pointing to* EDITH] Another witness! Miss Varney! She was here! She saw it all!

[THORNE *on* ARRELSFORD'S *mention of another witness glances quickly up* L. *toward* EDITH, *and at once turns front and stands motionless, waiting.—*GENERAL RANDOLPH *turns left and sees* EDITH]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Up* C. *on* R. *bluffly touching hat*] Miss Varney! [EDITH *comes forward a little* L. *of* C.] Do you know anything about this?

EDITH. [*Speaks in low voice*] About what sir?

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Mr. Arrelsford here claims that Captain Thorne is acting without authority in this office and that you can testify to that effect.

EDITH. [*Very quietly, in low voice*] Mr. Arrelsford is mistaken—he has the highest authority.

[ARRELSFORD *aghast.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH *surprised.*—THORNE *facing* L. *listening—motionless*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*After an instant's pause*] What authority has he?

EDITH. [*Drawing the Commission used in Act I from her dress. While her voice is low and controlled it trembles slightly and she has to pause a little twice*] The

authority—of the President—of the Confederate States of America! [*Handing the Commission to* GENERAL RANDOLPH.—GENERAL RANDOLPH *takes the Commission and at once opens and examines it.*—EDITH *stands a moment where she was, looking neither at* ARRELSFORD *nor* THORNE, *then slowly retires up and stands back of others out of the way*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [C.—*Looking at the Commission*] What's this! Major's Commission! Assigned to duty on the Signal Corps! In command of the Telegraph Department!

ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Breaking out*] That commission—let me explain how she—— I beg you to——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. That'll do!—I suppose this is a forgery too?

ARRELSFORD. Let me tell you sir——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. You've told me enough! Sergeant—take him to headquarters!

SERGEANT OF THE GUARD. [*Quick salute*] Fall in there! [*Motioning men at instrument. Men at instrument hurry across to* L. *and fall into rank*] Forward march!

[SERGEANT *and* GUARD *quickly rush* ARRELSFORD *across to doors up* R. C. *and off—the* SERGEANT *shouting to him to keep quiet, and continuing to until out of hearing outside up* R.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Resisting and protesting as he is forced across and off at doors up* R. C. No!—For God's sake General—listen to me! It's the Yankee Secret Service! Never mind me, but don't let that dispatch go out! He's a damned Yankee Secret Agent! His brother brought in the signal to-night! [Etc.]

[*Sounds of footsteps of the* GUARD *and voices of* ARRELSFORD *and* SERGEANT *dying away down the corridor outside up* R.—*Short pause.*—THORNE *motionless through above looking front.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH, *who crossed to up* L. C. *on men forcing* ARRELSFORD *off, goes down* C. *and looks across at* THORNE]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Gruffly*] Cap'n Thorne! [THORNE *comes to erect military position. Turns* L. *and goes to the* GENERAL *at* C. *saluting*] It's your own fault Cap'n! If you'd had the sense to mention this before we'd have been saved a damned lot o' trouble!—There's your Commission! [*Handing Commission to* THORNE.—THORNE *takes it saluting.*—GENERAL *turns to go*] I can't understand why they have to be so cursed shy about their Secret Service Orders! [*Goes up toward door up* R. C. *Stops and speaks to* FIRST OPERATOR *who is standing at* R. *of door*] Lieutenant! [FIRST OPERATOR *salutes*] Take your orders from Major Thorne. [*Turns and goes heavily off at doors up* R. C. *very much out of temper*] [*Note.*—GENERAL *must on no account emphasize "Major"*]

[FIRST OPERATOR *goes down* R. *and sits at telegraph table on extreme* R. *going to work on papers.—No noise.*—THORNE *stands facing* L., *Commission in his* R. *hand, until the* GENERAL *is off. Turns head slowly around to front and looks across to* R. *watching to see when the* GENERAL *is gone—at the same time crushing the Commission in his right hand. After exit of* GENERAL *he instantly glides to telegraph instrument* A. *and begins sending with* R. *hand—still holding commission in it.*—EDITH *comes quickly down to* THORNE *on his left and very near him*]

EDITH. [*Speaks breathlessly in a half whisper*] Cap'n Thorne! [THORNE *stops telegraphing—hand still on key—but does not look at her.—She goes on in low voice, hurried—breathless*] That Commission—gives you authority—long enough to escape from Richmond!

THORNE. Escape! After all this! Impossible! [*Seizes key and begins to send*]

EDITH. Oh!—You would n't do it—*now!*

[THORNE *instantly stops telegraphing and looks at her*]

EDITH. I brought it—*to save your life!* I did n't think you'd use it—*for anything else!* Oh—you would n't!

[THORNE *stands looking at her.—Sudden sharp call from instrument* A.—*He instantly turns back to it. His hand moves to grasp it—hovers uncertainly over it as he hesitates.*—EDITH *sees his hand at the key again—covers her face and moans, at the same time turning away* L. *She moves up to the doors up* R. C. *and goes out.*—THORNE *stands in a desperate struggle with himself as instrument* A. *is clicking off the same signal that he made when calling up the front. He almost seizes the key—then resists—and finally, with a bang of right fist on the table, turns*

and strides across to up L. C.—*the Commission crushed in his* R. *hand*]

FIRST OPERATOR. [*Who has been listening to calls of instrument* A. *on table* R. C., *rising at* R. *as* THORNE *comes to a stand up* L. C.] They're calling for that dispatch sir! What shall I do?

THORNE. [*Turning quickly*] Send it!

[FIRST OPERATOR *drops into seat at table* R. C. *and begins sending at same time spreading out the dispatch which he is sending from near left end of table*]

[THORNE *stands motionless an instant. As* OPERATOR *begins to send he turns round a little up to* R. *slowly and painfully,* R. *arm up across eyes in a struggle with himself. Suddenly he breaks away and dashes toward table* R. C.]

THORNE. No no—stop! [*Seizes the dispatch from the table in his* R. *hand which still has the Commission crumpled in it*] I can't do it! I can't do it! [FIRST OPERATOR *rises in surprise on* THORNE *seizing the dispatch, and stands facing him.*—THORNE *points at instrument unsteadily*] Revoke the order! It was a mistake!—I refuse to act under this Commission! [*Throwing the papers in his* R. *hand down on the floor—then turning away to* L. *and walking uncertainly up toward* L. C.—*turning there and after slight hesitation walking across to doors up* R. C.—*pausing an instant as he supports himself with hand on the upper door as it stands open—then exits unsteadily at doors up* R. C. *and passes out of sight down the corridor to* R.]

[CURTAIN]

ACT IV

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

[SCENE:—*Drawing room at* GENERAL VARNEY'S. *This is the same set as in Acts I and II.—The furniture is somewhat disordered as if left as it was after the disturbances at the close of the Second Act. —Couch up* R. *where* ARRELSFORD *put it end of Act II. Nothing is broken or upset. Half light in room. Lamps lighted but not strong on. See that portières on windows down* R. *are closed.—Thunder of distant cannonading and sounds of volleys of musketry and exploding shells on very strong at times during this act. Quivering and rather subdued flashes of light—(the artillery is some miles distant)—shown at windows* R. *on cues. Violent and hurried ringing of church bells in distant parts of the city—deep, low tones booming out like fire bells. Sounds of hurried passing in the street outside of bodies of soldiers—artillery—cavalry, etc. on cues, with many horse-hoof and rattling gun carriage and chain effects—shouting to horses—orders, bugle calls, etc.*]

[NOTE:—*This thunder of cannonading, shelling fortifications, musketry, flashes, etc., must be kept up during the act, coming in now and then where it will not interfere with dialogue, and so arranged that the idea of a desperate attack will not be lost. Possible places for this effect will be marked thus in the manuscript—* [XXX]

[*At rise of curtain, thunder of artillery and flashes of light now and then. Ringing of church and fire bells in distance*]

[CAROLINE *is discovered in window up* R. *shrinking back against curtains and looking out through the window in a terified way*]

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[*Enter* MRS. VARNEY *coming hurriedly down the stairway from up* L. *and entering through door or arch up* L. C.]

MRS. VARNEY. Caroline! [CAROLINE *goes to her.—She takes* CAROLINE *forward a little*] Tell me what happened? She won't speak! Where has she been? Where was it?

CAROLINE. [*Frightened*] It was at the telegraph office!

MRS. VARNEY. What did she do? What happened there? Do try to tell!

[*Flashes—cannonading—bells, etc., kept up strong. Effect of passing artillery begins in the distance very faint*]

CAROLINE. Oh I *don't* know! How can I tell? I was afraid and ran out! [*Alarm bell very strong*] It's the alarm bell, Mrs. Varney—to call out the reserves!—That's to call out the reserves!

MRS. VARNEY. Yes—yes, I know it dear! [*A glance of anxiety toward windows right*] They're making a terrible attack to-night. Lieutenant Maxwell was right! That quiet spell was the signal! [*Artillery effect louder*]

CAROLINE *crosses timidly to window up* R.]

CAROLINE [*Turning to* MRS. VARNEY *and speaking above the noise, which is not yet on full*] It's another regiment of artillery goin' by! They're sendin' 'em all over to Cemetery Hill! That's where the fighting is! Cemetery Hill! [*Effect on loud*]

[CAROLINE *watches from window.—* MRS. VARNEY *crosses over left and rings bell.—As artillery effect dies away* MARTHA *enters door up* L. C. *from* R.]

MRS. VARNEY. [*To* MARTHA] Go up and stay with Miss Edith till I come. Don't leave her a moment Martha—not a moment!

MARTHA. No'm—I won't. [*She turns and hastens off at door up* L. C. *and up the stairway*]

[*Alarm bell and cannon on strong*]

MRS. VARNEY. Do close the curtains Caroline! [*Moves toward up* C.]

[CAROLINE *closes the window curtains at right*]

CAROLINE. I'm afraid they're goin' to have a right bad time to-night! [*Going to* MRS. VARNEY]

MRS. VARNEY. Indeed I'm afraid so!—Now try to think dear, who was at the telegraph office? Can't you tell me something?

CAROLINE. [*Shaking her head*] No—only —they arrested Mr. Arrelsford!

MRS. VARNEY. Mr. Arrelsford! Why you don't mean that he was—that he was actually arrested!

CAROLINE. Yes I do—an' I was glad of it!—An' General Randolph—he came—I went an' brought him there—an' Oh—he was in a frightful temper!

MRS. VARNEY. And Edith—now you can tell me—what did *she* do?

CAROLINE. I can't Mrs. Varney—I don't know! I just waited for her outside—an' when she came out she could n't speak —an' then we hurried home! That 's all I know Mrs. Varney—truly!

[*Loud ringing of door bell in another part of the house.*—CAROLINE *and* MRS. VARNEY *turn toward door up* L. C.—*Noise of heavy steps outside left and* ARRELSFORD *almost immediately strides into the room, followed by two privates, who stand at the door*]

[CAROLINE *steps back up stage a little as* ARRELSFORD *enters, and* MRS. VARNEY *faces him*]

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ARRELSFORD. [L. C.—*Roughly*] Is your daughter in the house?

MRS. VARNEY. [*After a second's pause*] Certainly!

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ARRELSFORD. I'll see her if you please!

MRS. VARNEY. I don't know that she 'll care to receive you at present.

ARRELSFORD. What she cares to do at present is of small consequence! Shall I go up to her room with these men or will you have her come down here to me?

MRS. VARNEY. Neither one nor the other until I know your business.

[*Effect of passing cavalry and artillery*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Excitedly*] My business! You 'll know mighty quick! It 's a very simple matter Mrs. Varney! Got a few questions to ask!—Listen to that! [*Cannonading becomes heavy*] Now you know what "Attack To-night Plan Three" means! Now you know!

MRS. VARNEY. Is that—Is that the attack they meant!

ARRELSFORD. That 's the attack Madam! They 're breaking through our lines at Cemetery Hill! That was PLAN THREE! We 're rushing over the reserves but they may not get there in time! —Now if you please I 'll see Miss Varney!

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[CAROLINE *has crossed at back to door up* L. C. *as if going out, but turns near door to hear what* ARRELSFORD *is saying*]

MRS. VARNEY. What has my daughter to do with this?

ARRELSFORD. Do with it! She did it!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Astonished*] What!

ARRELSFORD. Do you hear what I say—she did it!

[*Noise of passing Cavalry Officers going by singly*]

MRS. VARNEY. Impossible!

ARRELSFORD. Impossible or not as you choose!—We had him there—in his own trap—under arrest—*under arrest you understand*—when she brought in that Commission!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Horrified*] You don't mean she—

ARRELSFORD. I mean she put the game in his hands! He got the wires! His cursed dispatch went through! As soon as I got to headquarters they saw the trick! They rushed the guard back—the scoundrel had got away! But we 're after him hot, an' if she knows where he is—[*About to turn toward door up* L. C.] I 'll get it out of her!

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MRS. VARNEY. You don't suppose my daughter would—

ARRELSFORD. I suppose anything!

MRS. VARNEY. I 'll not believe it!

ARRELSFORD. We can't stop for what you believe! [*Turns to go up* L. C.]

[*Alarm bells gradually cease*]

MRS. VARNEY. Let me speak to her!

[*Passing cavalry effect has died away by this time*]

ARRELSFORD. I 'll see her myself! [*Going up* L.]

[CAROLINE *has stepped quietly down so that as* ARRELSFORD *turns to go toward stairway she confronts him just within the door or arch up* L. C.]

CAROLINE. [*Up* L. C. *between* ARRELSFORD *and the door.—Almost on cue of his last speech*] Where is your order for this?

ARRELSFORD. [*Stopped by* CAROLINE *up* L. C.—*After an instant's surprise*] I've got a word or two to say to you—after I 've been upstairs!

CAROLINE. Show me your order for *going* upstairs!

ARRELSFORD. Department business—I don't

require an order! [*Moves as if to pass her*]

CAROLINE. [*Stepping in his way again*] Oh, you've made a great mistake about that! This is a private house! It is n't the telegraph office! If you want to go up any stairs or see anybody about anything you'll have to bring an order! I don't know much—but I know *something* —an' that's it! [*She turns and exits door up* L. C. *and runs up the stairway*]

[XXX *light*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Turns sharply to* MRS. VARNEY] Am I to understand Madam, that you—

[*Loud ringing of door bell in distant part of house, followed almost immediately by the sound of heavy door outside* L. *and tramp of many feet in the hallway*]

[*The sound of cavalry begins again*]

[ARRELSFORD *and* MRS. VARNEY *turn*]

[*Enter at door or arch up* L. C. *from* L. *a* SERGEANT *and four men. Men are halted up* L.—OFFICER *advances to* MRS. VARNEY.—ARRELSFORD *steps back a little up* C.]

SERGEANT. [*Touching his cap roughly*] Are you the lady that lives here ma'am?

MRS. VARNEY. [R. C.] I am Mrs. Varney!

SERGEANT. [C.] I've got an order to search the house! [*Showing* MRS. VARNEY *the order*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Coming quickly down* L. C.] Just in time!—I'll go through the house if you please!

SERGEANT. [*Roughly*] You can't go through on this order—it was issued to me.

MRS. VARNEY. You were sent here to——

SERGEANT. Yes ma'am! Sorry to trouble you but we'll have to be quick about it! If we don't get him here we've got to follow down Franklin Street—he's over this way somewhere! [*Turns* L. *about to give orders to men*]

MRS. VARNEY. Who? Who is it you——

SERGEANT. [*Turning hurriedly at* L. C.] Man named Thorne—Cap'n of Artillery—that's what he went by! [*Turns to his men*] Here—this way! That room in there! [*Indicating room up* C.] Two of you outside! [*Pointing to windows*] Cut off those windows.

[*Two men run into room up* C. *and two off at windows* R. *as indicated, throwing open curtains and windows as they do so.*—MRS. VARNEY *stands aside* R. C.—SERGEANT *glances quickly round the room—pushing desk out and looking behind it, etc.—Keep cavalry effects on and flashes intermittently during this business.—Also occasional low thunder of distant artillery. Cavalry effects distant—as if going down a street several blocks away.—During bus.* ARRELSFORD *goes to door* L. *and gives an order to his men. Then he exits door left.—Men who came with* ARRELSFORD *exit after him*]

[*As the cannonading begins again, the two men who went off at door up* C. *to search, re-enter shoving the old negro* JONAS *roughly into the room.—He is torn and dirty and shows signs of rough handling.—They force him down* C. *a little way and he stands crouching*]

SERGEANT. [R. C.—*To men*] Where did you get that?

PRIVATE. [C.] Hiding in a closet sir.

SERGEANT. [*Going* C.—*To* JONAS] What are you doing in there? If you don't answer me we'll kick the life out of you! [*Short pause.—To* MRS. VARNEY] Belongs to you I reckon?

MRS. VARNEY. [R. C.] Yes—but they want him for carrying a message——

SERGEANT. [*Interrupting*] Well if they want him they can come an' get him—we're looking for someone else! [*Motions to men*] Throw him back in there! [*Men shove* JONAS *off at door up* C.—*Other men re-enter from windows at right*] Here—this room! Be quick now! Cover that door! [*Two men have quick business of searching down* R. *and* L.—*The other two men stand on guard door up* L. C.] Sorry to disturb you ma'am! [*Bell rings in distant part of house*]

MRS. VARNEY. Do what you please—I have nothing to conceal! [*Sound of heavy door outside up* L.]

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[*Voice of* ORDERLY *calling outside up* L.]

ORDERLY. [*Outside up* L.] Here! Lend a hand will you!

[*Two men at door up left exit at left to help someone outside*] [*Enter the* ORDERLY *who took* WILFRED *away in Act II. coming on hurriedly at door up* L. C. *from* L.—*Stands just below door—a few steps into room. He is splashed with foam and mud*

from hard riding. He sees SERGEANT *and salutes.*—SERGEANT *salutes* ORDERLY *and goes over, looking out of window up* R.—MRS. VARNEY *upon seeing the* ORDERLY *utters a low cry of alarm*]

ORDERLY. I've brought back the boy ma'am!

MRS. VARNEY. [R. C.—*Starting forward*] Oh! What do you— What——

ORDERLY. We never got out there at all! The Yankees made a raid down at Mechanicsville not three miles out! The Home Guard was goin' by on the dead run to head 'em off, an' before I knew it he was in with 'em riding like mad! There was a bit of a skirmish an' he got a clip across the neck—nothing at all ma'am—he rode back all the way an'—

[*Cavalry effects die away gradually*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Moving toward* C.] Oh—Wilfred! He's—he's hurt!

ORDERLY. Nothing bad ma'am—don't upset yourself!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Starts toward the door*] Where did you—[*Stops on seeing* WILFRED] [*Enter* WILFRED *at door left supported by the two* MEN.—*He is pale and has a bandage about his neck.*—MRS. VARNEY, *after the slight pause on his entrance goes to him at once*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Going to* WILFRED] Wilfred!

WILFRED. [*Weak voice—motioning* MRS. VARNEY *away*] It's all right—it's all right—you don't understand! [*Tries to free himself from the men who are supporting him*] What do you want to hold me like that for? [*Frees himself and walks toward* C. *a little unsteadily*]—You see—I can walk all right! [MRS. VARNEY *comes down anxiously on his right and holds him*] [WILFRED *turns and sees his mother and takes her hand with an effort to do it in as casual a manner as possible*] How-dy-do Mother!—Did n't expect me back so soon, did you?—Tell you how it was—[*Turns and sees* ORDERLY. *To* ORDERLY] Don't you go away now—I 'm going back with you—just wait till I rest up about a minute.—See here! They 're ringing the bells to call out the reserves! [*Starting weakly toward door* L.] That settles it—I 'll go right now!

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MRS. VARNEY. [*Gently holding him back*] No no Wilfred—not now!

[NOTE; WILFRED *must get well over to* R. C. *when he speaks to* MRS. VARNEY, *and not move back to left more than a step or two, in order to be near the couch*]

[*The cannonading sounds more loudly*]

WILFRED. [*Weakly*] Not now!—You hear that—you hear those bells—and tell me—not now!—I—[*Sways a little*] I—[MRS. VARNEY *supports him tenderly*]

SERGEANT. [*Quick undertone to* MEN] Stand by there! [WILFRED *faints.*—MRS. VARNEY *supports him, but almost immediately the* TWO MEN *come to her assistance.*—SERGEANT *and* TWO MEN *push the couch forward down* R. C. *and they quickly lay him on it with his head on the right.*—MRS. VARNEY *goes to head of couch and holds* WILFRED'S *head as they lay him down*]

[*Cannonading and other effects gradually cease*]

SERGEANT. [*To one of the men*] Find some water will you? [*To* MRS. VARNEY] Put his head down ma'am—put his head down an' he 'll be all right in a minute.

[*A* PRIVATE *hurries off at door up* L. C. *to* R. *on order to get water.*—SERGEANT *gets chair from up* C. *and puts it back of couch.*—MRS. VARNEY *goes back of couch attending to* WILFRED.—PRIVATE *re-enters with basin of water and gives it to* MRS. VARNEY]

OFFICER. [*To* MEN] This way now!

[MEN *move quickly to door or arch up* L. C.—OFFICER *gives quick directions to* MEN *at door. All exit at door up* L. C.—*one or two going* R. *and* SERGEANT *with most of men going up the stairway.*—ORDERLY *is left standing* L. *a little below door, exactly as he was.*—MRS. VARNEY *kneeling back of* WILFRED *and bathing his head tenderly—using her handkerchief*]

ORDERLY. [*After brief pause*] If there ain't anything else ma'am, I 'd better report back.

MRS. VARNEY. Yes—don't wait!—The wound is dressed is n't it?

ORDERLY. Yes ma'am—I took him to the Winder Hospital—they said he 'd be on his feet in a day or two—he only wants to keep quiet a bit.

MRS. VARNEY. Tell the General just how it happened!

ORDERLY. [*Touching cap*] I sure will ma'am. [*He turns and hurries off at door up* L. C. *to* L.]

[*Short pause.*—MRS. VARNEY *gently bathing* WILFRED'S *head and wrists*] [*Sound of alarm bells dies away excepting that from a very distant one which continues to ring in muffled tones*] [CAROLINE *appears coming down the stairway up* L. *absent-mindedly, stopping when part way down because she sees someone on couch with* MRS. VARNEY *bathing his head. She looks more intently. Then suddenly starts and runs down the rest of the way and into the room at door up* L. C. *stopping dead when a little way in and looking across at what is going on.*—MRS. VARNEY *does not see her at first.*—CAROLINE *stands motionless—face very white.* —MRS. VARNEY *after a moment's pause sees* CAROLINE]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Rising quickly*] Caroline dear! [*Goes to* CAROLINE C.] It's *nothing!* [*Holds* CAROLINE, *though the girl seems not to know it, her face expressionless and her eyes fixed on* WILFRED] He's hardly hurt at all! There —there—don't *you* faint too, dear!

CAROLINE. [*Very low voice*] I'm not going to faint! [*Sees the handkerchief in* MRS. VARNEY'S *hand*] Let me—[*Takes the handkerchief and goes across, toward front of couch. Turns to* MRS. VARNEY]—I can take care of him—I don't need anybody here *at all!* [*Goes toward* WILFRED]

MRS. VARNEY. But Caroline——

CAROLINE. [*Still with a strange quiet.—Looks calmly at* MRS. VARNEY] Mrs. Varney—there's a heap o' soldiers goin' round upstairs—lookin' in all the rooms. I reckon you'd better go an' attend to 'em.

MRS. VARNEY. Upstairs! Why I didn't know they——

CAROLINE. Well they did.—I was keepin' 'em quiet as long as I could.

MRS. VARNEY. I—I must go up and see to it! [*Turns and moves up* L. C.—*Turns back*] You know what to do dear!

CAROLINE. Oh yes! [*Dropping down on the floor beside* WILFRED *in front of couch*]

MRS. VARNEY. Bathe his forehead—he isn't badly hurt!—I won't be long! [*Exit hurriedly door up* L. C. *closing the portières or curtains together after her*]

[CAROLINE *on her knees close to* WILFRED, *tenderly bathing his forehead and smoothing his hair*] [WILFRED *soon begins to show signs of reviving*]

CAROLINE. [*Speaking to* WILFRED *in low tone as he revives.—Not a continued speech, but with pauses*—] Wilfred dear!—Wilfred! You're not hurt much are you?—Oh no—you're not! There there!—You'll feel better in just a minute!—Yes—just a minute!

WILFRED [*Weakly.—Before he realizes what has happened*] Is there—are you—[*Looks round with wide open eyes*]

CAROLINE. Oh Wilfred—don't you know me?

WILFRED. [*Looks at her for a moment before speaking.—Voice weak—but clear and audible throughout this scene with* CAROLINE] What are you talking about? Of course I know you!—Say—what am I doing anyhow—taking a bath?

CAROLINE. No no!—You see Wilfred—you just fainted a little an'——

WILFRED. Fainted! [CAROLINE *nods*] *I fainted!* [*A weak attempt to rise.—Begins to remember*] Oh—[*Sinks back weakly*]—Yes of course!—I was in a fight with the Yanks—an' got knocked—[*Begins to remember that he was wounded.—He thinks about it a moment, then looks strangely at* CAROLINE]

CAROLINE. [*After looking at* WILFRED *in silence*] Oh—what is it?

WILFRED. I'll tell you one thing right yere! I'm not going to load you up with a cripple! Not much!

CAROLINE. Cripple!

WILFRED. I reckon I've got an arm knocked off have n't I?

CAROLINE. [*Quickly*] No no! You have n't Wilfred! [*Shaking head emphatically*] They're both on all right!

WILFRED. [*After thinking a moment. Weak voice*] Maybe I had a hand shot away?

CAROLINE. Oh no—not a single one!

WILFRED. Are my—are my ears on all right?

CAROLINE. [*Looks on both sides of his head*] Yes—they're all right Wilfred—you need n't trouble about them a minute! [WILFRED *thinks a moment. Then turns his eyes slowly upon her*]

WILFRED. How many legs have I got left?

CAROLINE. [*Looks to see*] All of 'em—Every one!

[*Last alarm bell ceases*]

WILFRED. [*After pause*] Then—if there's enough of me left to—to amount to anything—[*Looks in* CAROLINE'S *face a mo-*

ment] you 'll take charge of it just the same?—How about that?

CAROLINE. [*After pause*] That 's all right too! [CAROLINE *suddenly buries her face on his shoulder.*—WILFRED *gets hold of her hand and kisses it.*—CAROLINE *suddenly raises her head and looks at him*] I tried to send you a telegram—an' they would n't let me!

WILFRED. Did you? [CAROLINE *nods*] What did you say in it? [*Pause*] Tell me what you said!

CAROLINE. It was something nice! [*Looks away*]

WILFRED. It was, eh? [CAROLINE *nods with her head turned away from him.*—WILFRED *reaches up and turns her head toward him again*] You 're sure it was something nice!

CAROLINE. Well I would n't have gone to work an' telegraphed if it was something *bad* would I?

WILFRED. Well if it was good, why did n't you send it?

CAROLINE. Goodness gracious! How could I when they would n't let me!

WILFRED. Would n't let you!

CAROLINE. I should think *not!* [*Moves back a little for* WILFRED'S *business of getting up*] Oh they had a terrible time at the telegraph office!

WILFRED. Telegraph office. [*Tries to recollect*] Telegr—were you there when—[*Raising himself*]

[*Alarm bell begins to ring again in distant part of the town*]

[XXX]

[CAROLINE *moves back a little frightened—without getting up—watching him.*—WILFRED *suddenly tries to get up*] That was it!—They told me at the hospital! [*Attempts to rise*]

[*The cannonading becomes louder*]

CAROLINE. [*Rising*] Oh,—you must n't! [*She tries to prevent him from rising*]

WILFRED. [*Gets partly on his feet and pushes* CAROLINE *away with one hand, holding to the chair near the desk* R. *for support with the other*] He gets hold of our Department Telegraph—sends out a false order—weakens our defense at Cemetery Hill—an' they 're down on us in a minute! An' she gave it to him!—My sister Edith! She gave him the Commission that allowed him to do it!

CAROLINE. [L. *of* WILFRED] But you don't know how the——

WILFRED. [*Imperiously*] I know this—if the General was here he 'd see her! The General is n't here—I 'll attend to it!

[*Sounds of cannon*]

[WILFRED *begins to feel a dizziness and holds to the desk or chair near it for support.*—CAROLINE *starts toward him in alarm.—He braces himself erect again with an effort and motions her off.—She stops*]

WILFRED. [*Weakly but with clear voice, and commandingly*] Send her to me! [CAROLINE *stands almost frightened with her eyes upon him*]

[*Enter* MRS. VARNEY *coming down the stairway and in at door up* L. C.—CAROLINE *hurries toward her in a frightened way—with a glance back at* WILFRED]

CAROLINE. He wants to see Edith!

MRS. VARNEY. [*Going toward* WILFRED] Not now Wilfred—you 're too weak and ill!

[CAROLINE *remains up* C.]

WILFRED. [R.] Tell her to come here!

MRS. VARNEY. [L. *of* WILFRED] It won't do any good—she won't speak!

WILFRED. I don't *want* her to speak—I 'm going to speak to *her!*

MRS. VARNEY. Some other time!

WILFRED. [*Leaves the desk or chair that he held to and moves toward door up* L. C. *as if to pass his mother and* CAROLINE] Very well—if you won't send her to me—I 'll——

MRS. VARNEY. [*Stopping him*] There there! If you insist I 'll call her!

WILFRED. I insist!

[*Cannonading*]

MRS. VARNEY. [*Turns toward door and goes a few steps, crossing* CAROLINE. *Stops. Turns back to* CAROLINE] Stay with him dear!

WILFRED. [*Weak voice but commandingly*] No!—I 'll see her alone!

[MRS. VARNEY *looks at him an instant. Sees that he means what he says. Motions* CAROLINE *to come.*—CAROLINE *looks at* WILFRED *a moment, then turns and slowly goes to door up* L. *where* MRS. VARNEY *is waiting for her. Looks sadly back at* WILFRED *again, and then goes out with* MRS. VARNEY *at door up* L. C. *and up the stairway*]

[XXX]

[WILFRED *stands motionless an instant down* R. C. *as he was when the two ladies left the room.—Noise of approaching men—low shouts—steps on gravel, etc., outside up* R., *begins*

in distance.—On this WILFRED *turns and moves up* C. *looking off to right. Then moves up into the doorway opening up* C. *but does not open the door*]

[XXX]

[*Alarm bell ceases.—Low sound of distant voices and the tramp of hurrying feet quickly growing louder and louder outside right.—When it is on strong,* THORNE *appears springing over balustrade of veranda above window up* R. *and instantly runs forward into the room backing close against right wall below window and holding curtain or hanging between him and the window as he does so. A stand with vase is thrown over with this movement and crashes down in front of lower window. He stands there panting—face pale—eyes hunted and desperate and revolver clutched in right hand held at ready. His left hand is bandaged roughly. He has no hat, or coat, hair is disheveled, shoes dusty, trousers and shirt torn and soiled. As the noise of his pursuers dies away he turns into the room and makes a rapid start across toward* L. *looking quickly about as if searching for someone*]

[WILFRED—*who has been watching him from up* C. *in the doorway—turns quickly down* C. *as* THORNE *crosses, coming right of him and seizing him by right arm and shoulder*]

WILFRED. [*Seizing hold of* THORNE'S *right arm and shoulder as* THORNE *crosses*] Halt! You're under arrest!

THORNE. [*With a quick glance back at* WILFRED] Wait a minute! [*Shaking loose from* WILFRED] Wait a minute an' I'll go with you! [*Going up* L. C. *looking this way and that*]

WILFRED. [*A step toward* THORNE *as if to follow*] Halt I say! You're my prisoner!

THORNE. [*Turning and going quickly to* WILFRED] All right—prisoner—anything you like! [*Pushing his revolver into* WILFRED'S *hands*] Here—take this! Shoot the life out of me—but let me see my brother first!

WILFRED. [*Taking the revolver*] Your brother!

THORNE. [*Nods—breathless*] One look in his face—one look—that's all I ask!

WILFRED. Where is he?

THORNE. [*Breathless*] I don't know! [*Quick glance about. Points toward the door up* C.] Maybe they took him in there! [*Striding up* C. *toward door as he speaks*]

WILFRED. [*Springing up between* THORNE *and the door and covering him with revolver*] What is he doing?

THORNE. [*Facing* WILFRED *half way up* C.] What!

WILFRED. [*Still covering* THORNE] What's he doing in there?

THORNE. Nothing! . . . He's dead!

[WILFRED *looks at* THORNE *a moment. Then begins to back slowly up to door up* C., *keeping eyes on* THORNE *and revolver ready but not aimed.—Opens door up* C. *Quick look into the room. Faces* THORNE *again*]

WILFRED. It's a lie!—There's no one there!—It's another trick of yours! [*Starts toward window up* R.—*half backing so that he can still cover* THORNE *with revolver*] Call in the Guard! Call the Guard! Captain Thorne is here in the house!

[WILFRED *exits at window* R. *calling the* GUARD. *His voice is heard outside* R. *growing fainter and fainter in the distance*]

[THORNE *stands an instant after* WILFRED *disappears—then springs to the door up* C. *Opens it and looks into the room, going part way off at the door. He glances this way and that within the room, then attitude of despair—left hand dropping from frame of door to his side as he comes to erect position—right hand retaining hold of knob of door*]

[*On* THORNE *standing erect* EDITH *enters through the portières of the door up* L. C.—*expecting to find* WILFRED. *She stands just within the doorway to the* L. *of it*]

[THORNE *turns and comes out of room up* C., *closing the door as he does so. Turning away from the door—right hand still on the knob—he sees* EDITH *and stops motionless facing her*]

[*A pause for an instant*]

THORNE. [*Going toward* EDITH *a step or two*] You wouldn't tell me would you! He was shot in this room—an hour ago—my brother Harry!—I'd like one look in his dead face before they send me the

same way! Can't you tell me that much Miss Varney? Where is he? If you won't speak to me perhaps you 'll make some sign so I 'll know? It 's my brother Miss Varney! [EDITH *looks in his face an instant motionless—then turns and moves slowly down* L. C. *and stands near the table there*]

[*As* EDITH *stops near table* L. C. THORNE *turns away and goes toward window up* R.—*Before he reaches it there is a sudden burst of shouts and yells outside up* R.—*short and savage.*—THORNE *stops up* R. C. *on the shouts and stands supporting himself a little by the upper wall or a door frame. He turns front with a grim smile—a flash from distant artillery action lighting his face for an instant from window* R.]

THORNE. Ha!—They 're on the scent at last! [*Muttering it to himself*] They 'll get me now—and then it won't take long to finish me off! [*Turns toward* EDITH] And as that 'll be the last of me—[*Moves toward her*] As that 'll be the last of me Miss Varney—[*Comes down* L. C. *near her*] maybe you 'll listen to one thing! We can't all die a soldier's death—in the roar of battle—our friends around us—under the flag we love!—No—not all! Some of us have orders for another kind of work—desperate—dare-devil work—the hazardous schemes of the Secret Service. We fight our battles alone—no comrades to cheer us on—ten thousand to one against us—death at every turn! If we win we escape with our lives—if we lose—dragged out and butchered like dogs—no soldier's grave—not even a trench with the rest of the boys—alone—despised—forgotten! These were my orders Miss Varney—this is the death I die to-night—and I don't want you to think for one minute that I 'm ashamed of it.

[*Sudden shouts and noise of many men running outside up* R. *and also outside up* L.—THORNE *swings round and walks up* C. *in usual nonchalant manner, and stands up* C. *waiting and faced a little to* R. *of front, leaning on side of door with outstretched right arm. He simply waits—his face utterly atonic—no attitude or expression of bravado martyrdom*]

[EDITH *moves to left and stands near mantel*]

[*The shouts and stamping of running feet grow quickly louder on both* R. *and* L. *gauged so that as* THORNE *stands motionless up* C. *squads of Confederate soldiers rush in from both windows* R. *and from door up* L. C. *from* L.—*those on right headed by the* SERGEANT *who searched the house early in this act, and those on left by* CORPORAL.—WILFRED VARNEY *with revolver still in his hand, enters at window down* R. *in lead of others, coming to* R. C. *and letting men pass him.—The men from both sides run savagely toward* THORNE *and stand each side of him with bayonets charged hoping for the order to run him through*]

SERGEANT. Halt! Halt! [*The* MEN *stand motionless*]

WILFRED. [R. C.—*To* SERGEANT] There 's your man Sergeant—I hand him over to you!

SERGEANT. [*Up* R. C.—*Advancing to* THORNE *and putting hand roughly on his shoulder*] Prisoner!

[XXX]

[*Enter* ARRELSFORD *hurriedly at door up* L. C. *from* L.]

ARRELSFORD. [*Breaking through between men at* L.] Where is he? [*Sees* THORNE] Ah! We 've got him have we! [*Stands* L. C. *looking at* THORNE]

SERGEANT. Young Varney here captured him sir!

[*Enter* MRS. VARNEY *door up* L. C *from stairway. She goes down left side*]

ARRELSFORD. So!—Run down at last! [THORNE *pays no attention to* ARRELSFORD.—*He merely waits for the end of the disturbance*] Now you 'll find out what it costs to play your little game with our Government Telegraph Lines! [*Turns to* SERGEANT] Don't waste any time! Take him down the street and shoot him full of lead!—Out with him! [*Turns and goes down* L. C.]

[*Low shouts of approval from men, and general movement as if to start, the* SERGEANT *at same time shoving* THORNE *a little to swing him around toward left*]

SERGEANT. [*With other shouts*] Come along here!

WILFRED. [*A step toward* C.—*Revolver still in hand. Speaking with all his force*] No! [*Men and officers stand*

motionless] Whatever he is—whatever he's done—he has a right to a trial! [THORNE *turns and looks at* WILFRED]

ARRELSFORD. [*Down* L. C.] General Tarleton said to me, "If you find him shoot him on sight!"

WILFRED. [*Down* R. C.] I don't *care* what General Tarleton said—I captured the man—he's in this house—and he's not going out without he's treated fair! [WILFRED *looks up toward* THORNE.—*Their eyes meet.—After an instant* THORNE *turns away up stage, resting left hand against* L. *side of door frame*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Suddenly. Angrily*] Well—let him have it!—We'll give him a drum-head, boys—but it'll be the quickest drum-head ever held on earth! [*To* SERGEANT] Stack muskets here an' run 'em in for the court!

SERGEANT. [*Stepping a little down* C. *and facing about—back to audience*] Fall in here! [MEN *break positions each side and run up stage, falling quickly into a double rank just above* SERGEANT.—THORNE *is up* C. *above this double rank*] Fall in the Prisoner! [MEN *separate* R. *and* L. *leaving space at* C.—THORNE *steps down into position and stands*] Stack—arms! [*Front rank men stack.—Rear rank men pass pieces forward.—Front rank men lay them on stacks.*—SERGEANT *turns right to* MRS. VARNEY *and touches cap*] Where shall we find a vacant room ma'am?

MRS. VARNEY. At the head of the stairs—there's none on this floor.

SERGEANT. [*Turning to men*] Escort—left face! [*Men left face*—THORNE *obeying the order with them*] Forward—march!—File left!

[SOLDIERS *with* THORNE *march rapidly out of the room at door up* L. C. *and disappear up the stairway outside up* L.—*The* SERGEANT *exits door up* L. C. *and up stairway after men*]

[ARRELSFORD *exits after men door up* L. C. *following them closely up the stairway and off to* L.—WILFRED *follows off at door up* L. C. *and up the stairway with some effort.*—MRS. VARNEY *exits at door up* L. C. *and off to left*]

[EDITH *turns and crosses slowly to window at right. Pauses a moment there, flashes of light from distant cannonading on her face. She stands in window right—partly hidden by curtains—looking off*]

[*The door up* C. *slowly opens a little way and the old negro* JONAS *looks cautiously through from outside. Soon he opens the door and comes in almost crawling, and looking fearfully this way and that. After a moment his eyes light on the stacks of muskets. He goes to the one up* L. C.—*Looks about fearfully—apprehensively. Hesitates an instant.—During his next movements—artillery and cavalry effects on strong. Cannon and musketry fire in distance—alarm bells on strong—begin as men go upstairs*]

[JONAS *makes up his mind. He drops down on knees by stack of muskets up* L. C.—*snaps the breech lock of one without moving it from the stack—gets out the cartridge, looks at it, bites it with his teeth and looks at it again. Bites again and makes motions of getting the ball off and putting it in his pocket. Puts cartridge back in the musket, snaps the lock shut, and moves on to the next. Repeats the movement of taking the cartridge out, but is much quicker, biting off the ball at once. Repeats more rapidly and quickly with another musket, crawling quickly round the stack. Moves over to stack at* R. C. *Make scene as rapid as the action will permit*]

[*As* JONAS *gets well to work on muskets* EDITH *turns at window up* R. *and sees him. She stands a moment motionless—then comes down on right, and stands looking at him without moving.*—JONAS, *who began after leaving stack* L. C. *at upper side of stack* R. C.—*has worked around down stage on the stack, and has come to the lower side.*—EDITH *stands near the desk at* R. *and drops a book upon it, after the last musket but one, to make* JONAS *look up.*—JONAS *looks up and sees* EDITH. *He stops*]

[*Effects of cannonading have gradually been dying down to a low distant rumble, and passing artillery and cavalry discontinued. Alarm bells in distance, however, are still heard*]

JONAS. [*After pause. Very low voice*] Dhey's a-goin' ter shoot 'im—shoot 'im down like a dog, Missy—an' I could n't b'ar to see 'em do dat! I would n't like to see 'im killed—I would n't like it no-

ways! You won't say nuffin' 'bout dis—fer de sake of ole Jonas what was always so fond o' you—ebber sense ye was a little chile! [*He sees that* EDITH *does not appear angry, and goes on with his work of getting the bullet out of the last cartridge*] Ye see—I jiss take away dis yer—an' den dar won't be no harm to 'im what-some-ebber—less 'n day loads 'em up agin! [*Slowly hobbles to his feet as he speaks*] When dey shoots—an' he jiss draps down, dey 'll roll 'im over inter de gutter an' be off like dey was mad! Den I can be near by—an'— [*Suddenly thinks of something. A look of blank consternation comes over his face. He speaks in almost whisper*] How 's he goin' ter know! Ef he don't drap down dey 'll shoot him agin—an' dey 'll hab bullets in 'em nex' time! [*Anxiously glances around an instant*] Dey 'll hab bullets in 'em next time! [*Looks about. Suddenly to* EDITH] *You* tell 'im! *You* tell him Missy—it 's de ony-est way! Tell 'im to drap down! [*Supplicatingly*] Do dis fur ole Jonas honey—do it fur me—an' I 'll be a slabe to ye ez long ez I lib! [*Slight pause.—Sudden yell outside up left from a dozen men shut inside a room on the floor above.*—JONAS *starts and turns. Half whisper*] Dey 's a-goin' ter kill 'im!

[*Noise of heavy tramp of feet outside up* L. *above—doors opening, etc.—An indistinct order or two before regular order heard.*—JONAS *goes limping hurriedly to door up* C.]

SERGEANT. [*Outside up* L.—*Above*] Fall in!—Right face!—Forward—March!

JONAS. [*At door up* C.] Oh—tell 'im Missy! Tell 'im to drap down for God's sake! [*Exit* JONAS *at door up* C. *carefully closing it after him*]

[*Cannonading stronger*]

[*After an instant's pause* EDITH *crosses to* L. C. *and stands waiting near the table there, her face quite expressionless*]

[XXX]

[WILFRED *enters from* L. *at top of stairway, comes down the stairs and into the room at door up* L. C.—*Enter* CAROLINE *at door up* L. C. *from* L. *as* WILFRED *goes down* C. *She hurries after him with an anxious glance up stairway and entering at door up* L. C.]

CAROLINE. [*Overtaking* WILFRED—*on his* L.—*Low voice*] What are they—going to do?

WILFRED. [C.] Shoot him!

CAROLINE. When?

WILFRED. Now.

CAROLINE. [*Low exclamation of pity*] Oh!

[WILFRED *goes* R. C. *below lounge.*—CAROLINE *follows and stands near him on his* L. *looking on as* SOLDIERS *and others enter*]

[*Enter, coming down stairway up left at back the* SERGEANT, *followed by escort of* SOLDIERS. *They enter room at door or archway up* L. C. *and turn* R. *marching to position they were formerly in above the stacks of muskets*]

[*Enter* ARRELSFORD *up* L. *from above following down the stairway after the escort of* MEN. *He comes in through door or arch up* L. C. *and goes across to up* R. C.—MRS. VARNEY *enters at door up* L. C. *from* L. *and goes down left side*]

SERGEANT. [*Who is at* C. *facing up*] Halt! [MEN *halt*] Left face! [MEN *face front*]

[THORNE *enters at top of stairway up* L. *and comes down unconcernedly and a trifle absently—for his thoughts of certain persons far away. He is followed by* CORPORAL *with his carbine.*—THORNE *comes into position at* L. *of front line of men.*—CORPORAL *stands at* L. *of* THORNE]

SERGEANT. [*After* THORNE *is in position at* L. *of* MEN] Take—arms! [MEN *at once take muskets. All very quick*] Carry—arms! [*Bus.*—MEN *stand in line waiting*] Fall in the Prisoner! [THORNE *walks in front of* MEN *to* C. *and falls into position*] Left—face! [THORNE *and* MEN *face to left on order*] Forward——

EDITH. Wait!—[*Motion of hand to stop them without looking round. She controls her voice with difficulty*] Who is the officer in command?

SERGEANT. [*Turning to* EDITH *and touching cap awkwardly*] I 'm in command, Miss!

EDITH. I 'd like to—speak to the prisoner!

SERGEANT. Sorry Miss, but we have n't got *time!* [*Turns back to give order to* MEN]

EDITH. [*Sudden turn on him and hand out*] Oh—*Wait!* [SERGEANT *stops and turns slowly toward her again*] Only a word! [*Whispers it over to herself*] Only a word!

[SERGEANT *hesitates an instant—turns to* MEN *and steps up* L. C. *a little*]

SERGEANT. Right face! [MEN *face to front again on order.*—THORNE *obeying order with others*] Fall out the prisoner! [THORNE *moves forward one step out of rank and stands motionless*] Now Miss!

WILFRED. [R. C.—*Starting indignantly toward* C.] No!

[SERGEANT *turns in surprise*]

CAROLINE. [*Holding to* WILFRED *and speaking in a low voice*] Oh Wilfred—why can't she speak to him? She only wants to say good-bye!

[WILFRED *looks at* CAROLINE. *Then with gesture to* SERGEANT *indicates that he may go on, and turns away* R. *with* CAROLINE]

SERGEANT. [*Turning to* THORNE] The lady!

[THORNE *looking front as before. Then he turns slowly and looks at* SERGEANT.—SERGEANT *motions with his head indicating* EDITH.—THORNE *walks down to her, stopping close on her right, standing in military position, faced in same direction he walked, a little to* L. *of front*]

[ARRELSFORD *up* R. C. *looking at* EDITH *and* THORNE.—CAROLINE *with* WILFRED *down* R. C. *gives an occasional awed and frightened glance at* THORNE *and* EDITH.—*No movement after the* SERGEANT'S *order to "fall out the prisoner" and* THORNE'S *walk to* EDITH]

[EDITH, *after slight pause, speaks slowly, in almost a whisper and as if with an effort, but without apparent feeling, and without turning to* THORNE]

EDITH. [*Voice for* THORNE *alone to hear. Slowly. Distinctly. Without inflection. A slight occasional tremor. Pauses as indicated*] One of the servants—has taken the musket balls—out of the guns! If you care to fall on the ground when they fire—you may escape with your life!

THORNE. [*After motionless pause.—To* EDITH.—*Low voice*] Do you wish me to do this?

EDITH. [*Low voice—without turning*] It's nothing to me.

[THORNE, *with slight movement at the cue, turns slowly away.—Brief pause.—He turns toward* EDITH *again*]

THORNE. [*Very low voice*] Were you responsible in any way for—[EDITH *shakes her head slightly without looking at him.* —THORNE *turns and walks right to* C.—*Makes turn there and walks up* C. *and turns to* L. *facing the* SERGEANT *a little* R. *of* C. *and out of the way of bayonets in coming business*] Sergeant— [*As if making an ordinary military report*] You'd better take a look at your muskets—they've been tampered with.

SERGEANT. [*Snatching musket from man nearest him*] What the— [*Quickly snaps it open. Cartridge drops to floor.* SERGEANT *picks it up and looks at it*] Here!— [*Handing musket back to man.* —*Turns to squad and gives orders quickly as follows: Business on these orders very effective if carried out promptly and with precision*] Squad—ready! [MEN *come in one movement from "carry" to position for loading*] Draw—cartridge! [MEN *draw cartridges, the click and snap of locks and levers ringing out simultaneously along the line*] With ball cartridge—reload! [MEN *quickly reload. Same bus. of rapid click of locks and levers down the line*] Carry—arms! [MEN *come to carry on the instant. Motionless. Eyes front.—To* THORNE—*with off-hand salute*] Much obliged sir!

THORNE. [*Low voice. Off-hand—as if of no consequence*] That's all right. [*Stands facing* L. *waiting for order to fall in.*—WILFRED, *after* THORNE'S *warning to officer about muskets, watches him with open admiration*]

WILFRED. [*Suddenly walking up to* THORNE] I'd like to shake hands with you!

[THORNE *turns and looks at* WILFRED, *who is just below him a little to his right. A smile breaks gradually over his face*]

THORNE. [*Smiling*] Is this for yourself —or your father?

WILFRED. [*Earnestly*] For both of us sir! [*Putting out his hand a little way.* —THORNE *grasps his hand. They look into each other's faces a moment.*—WILFRED *turns away to down* R. C. *and goes up back of couch to* CAROLINE.—THORNE *looks after* WILFRED *to front an instant—then turns* L.] That's all, Sergeant!

SERGEANT. [*Lower voice than before*] Fall in the Prisoner! [THORNE *steps to place in the line and turns front*] Escort—left face! [MEN *and* THORNE *left face*] Forward ma—[*Sharp cry of "Halt! Halt!" outside up* L., *followed by bang of heavy door outside* L.]

SERGEANT. Halt! [MEN *stand motionless*

at left face. On seeing the ORDERLY *approaching—just before he is on*] Right face!

[MEN *and* THORNE *face to front*]

[*Enter quickly at door up* L. C. *from* L. *an* AID—*wearing Lieutenant's uniform.*—SERGEANT, *faced front up* L. C. *just forward of his men, salutes.*—AID *salutes*]

[XXX]

AID. [*Standing up* L. C.] General Randolph's compliments sir, and he 's on the way with orders!

ARRELSFORD. [*Up* R. C.] What orders, Lieutenant?—Anything to do with this case?

AID. [*No salute to* ARRELSFORD] I don't know what the orders are, sir. He 's been with the President.

ARRELSFORD. I sent word to the Department we 'd got the man and were going to drum-head him on the spot.

[WILFRED *and* CAROLINE *move unobtrusively to the upper side of couch*]

AID. Then this must be the case sir. I believe the General wishes to be present.

ARRELSFORD. Impossible! We 've held the court and I 've sent the finding to the Secretary! The messenger is to get his approval and meet us at the corner of Copley Street.

AID. I have no further orders sir! [*Retires up with quick military movement and turns facing front. Stands motionless*]

[*The cannonading becomes louder*]

[*Sound of heavy door outside up* L. *and the tread of the* GENERAL *as he strides across the hall*]

SERGEANT. [*Low voice to* MEN] Present —arms! [MEN *present*]

[SERGEANT, ORDERLY, ETC., *on salute*]

[*Enter* GENERAL RANDOLPH *at door up* L. C. *from* L. *striding on hurriedly—returning salutes as he goes down* C. *glancing about*]

[LIEUT. FORAY, *the* FIRST TELEGRAPH OPERATOR, *follows* GENERAL RANDOLPH *in at door up* L. C. *from* L. *He stands waiting up* L. C. *near door, faced front, military position*]

SERGEANT. [*Low order to* MEN] Carry—arms! [MEN *come to carry again*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Ah Sergeant!—[*Going down and across to* R.] Got the prisoner in here have you?

SERGEANT. [*Saluting*] Just taking him out sir.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [C.] Prison?

SERGEANT. No sir—to execute the sentence of the Court.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Had his trial then?

ARRELSFORD. [*Stepping down* R. C. *with a salute*] All done according to regulations, sir—the finding has gone to the Secretary.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [R. *to* ARRELSFORD] Found guilty I judge?

ARRELSFORD. Found guilty sir.—No time now for hanging—the court ordered him shot.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. What were the grounds for this?

ARRELSFORD. Conspiracy against our government and the success of our arms by sending a false and misleading dispatch containing forged orders.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Court 's been misinformed—that dispatch was never sent.

[EDITH *looks up with sudden breathless exclamation.*—WILFRED *turns with surprise.—Others are greatly astonished*]

ARRELSFORD. [*Coming down on right of* GENERAL] Why General—the dispatch —I saw him——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. I say the dispatch was n't sent! I expected to arrive in time for the trial and brought Foray here to testify. [*Calls to* LIEUTENANT FORAY *without looking round*] Lieutenant!

[LIEUTENANT FORAY *comes quickly down* L. C. *facing* GENERAL RANDOLPH.—*Salutes*]

Did Captain Thorne send out any dispatches after we left you with him in the office an hour ago?

LIEUTENANT FORAY. No sir. I was just going to send one under his order, but he countermanded it.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. What were his words at the time?

LIEUTENANT FORAY. He said he refused to act under that commission.

[EDITH *turns toward* THORNE *and her eyes are upon him for a moment*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. That will do, Lieutenant! [LIEUTENANT FORAY *salutes and retires up* L.] In addition we learn from General Chesney that no complete order was received over the wire—that Marston's Division was not withdrawn—that our position was not weakened in any way and the attack at that point has been repulsed. It 's plain, therefore, that the Court has been acting under

error. The President for this reason finds himself compelled to disapprove the finding and it is set aside.

ARRELSFORD. [*With great indignation*] General Randolph, this case was put in my hands and I——

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Interrupting bluffly, but without temper*] Well I take it out of your hands! Report back to the War Office with my compliments! [*Crossing to* R. C.]

[ARRELSFORD *turns and starts toward the door up* L. C. *but after proceeding a few steps stops and turns*]

ARRELSFORD. Had n't I better wait and see—

GENERAL RANDOLPH. No—don't wait to see anything. [ARRELSFORD *looks at* GENERAL RANDOLPH *an instant, then turns and after raising his hat to the ladies down left, walks with dignity out at door up* L. C. *and exits to* L.—*Sound of heavy door outside up* L. *closed with force.*—GENERAL RANDOLPH *in front of couch* R. C.] Sergeant! [SERGEANT *quickly down to* GENERAL RANDOLPH *on salute*] Hold your men back there. I 'll see the prisoner. [SERGEANT *salutes, turns, marches straight up from where he is to the left division of the escort so that he is a little to left of* THORNE, *and turns front*]

SERGEANT. Order—arms! [*Squad obeys with precision*] Parade—rest! [*Squad obeys order*] Fall out the Prisoner! [THORNE *steps forward one step out of the rank and stands*] The General! [THORNE *starts down* C. *to* GENERAL RANDOLPH.—*As* THORNE *steps forward on order*—"*The General*"—EDITH *moves quickly toward* C. *and intercepts him about two-thirds of the way down, on his left.*—THORNE *stopped by* EDITH *shows slight surprise for an instant, but quickly recovers and looks straight front*]

EDITH. [*To* THORNE *as she meets him.*—*Impulsively. Low voice*] Oh—why did n't you tell me!—I thought you sent it! I thought you—

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Surprised*] Miss Varney!

EDITH. [*Crossing* THORNE *to the* GENERAL] There 's nothing against him General Randolph!—He did n't send it so there 's nothing to try him for now!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. You 're very much mistaken Miss Varney. The fact of his being caught in our lines without his uniform is enough to swing him off in ten minutes.

[EDITH *moans a little, at same time moving back from* GENERAL *a step*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Cap'n Thorne—[THORNE *steps down and faces the* GENERAL] or whatever your name may be—the President is fully informed regarding the circumstances of your case, and I need n't say that we look on you as a cursed dangerous character! There is n't any doubt whatever that you 'd ought to be exterminated right now!—But considering the damned peculiarity of your behavior—and that you refused—*for some reason*—to send that dispatch when you might have done so, we 've decided to keep you out of mischief some other way. The Sergeant will turn you over to Major Whitfield sir! [SERGEANT *up* R. C. *salutes*] You 'll be held as a prisoner of war! [*Turns and goes* R. *a few steps*]

[EDITH *turns suddenly to* THORNE, *coming down before him as he faces* R.]

EDITH. [*Looking in his face.*—*Speaks in low voice*] Oh—that is n't nearly so bad!

[THORNE *holds her hand in his right*]

THORNE. No—?

EDITH. No!—Because—sometime—

THORNE. [*Low voice*] Ah—if it 's sometime, there 's nothing else in the world.

[*Slight pause.*—EDITH *sees* MRS. VARNEY *at* L. *and crosses to her,* THORNE *retaining her hand as she crosses—releasing it only when he has to*]

EDITH. Mamma, won't you speak to him?

[MRS. VARNEY *and* EDITH L. *talk quietly*]

WILFRED. [*Suddenly leaving* CAROLINE R. C., *striding down from behind couch to* THORNE, *and extending hand*] I 'd like to shake hands with you!

THORNE. [*Turning to* WILFRED] What—again? [*Taking* WILFRED'S *hand*]

[WILFRED, *shaking hands with* THORNE *and crossing him to* L. *as he does so—back to audience, laughing and very jovial about it*]

CAROLINE. [*Coming quickly down on right of* THORNE] So would I! [*Holding out her hand*]

[THORNE *lets go* WILFRED'S *hand—now on his left—and takes* CAROLINE'S]

WILFRED. Don't you be afraid now—it 'll be all right! They 'll give you a parole and——

CAROLINE. [*Breaking in enthusiastically*] A parole! Goodness gracious—they 'll give you *hundreds* of 'em! [*Turning away with funny little comprehensive gesture of both hands*]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Gruffly*] One moment if you please! [THORNE *turns at once, facing* GENERAL RANDOLPH *near* C. —CAROLINE *and* WILFRED *go up* R. C. *to above couch.*—EDITH *stands* L. C.—MRS. VARNEY *near table* L. C.] There 's only one reason on earth why the President has set aside a certain verdict of death. You held up that false order and made a turn in our favor. We expect you to make the turn complete and enter our service.

THORNE. [*After an instant's pause.—Quietly*] Why General—that 's impossible!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. You can give us your answer later!

THORNE. You have it now sir.

GENERAL RANDOLPH. You 'll very much regret that decision sir. It means you 'll be held a prisoner here and kept in close confinement until the Confederate Army marches into Washington!

THORNE. Why General, you 're making me a prisoner for life!

GENERAL RANDOLPH. Nothing of the kind sir! You 'll see it in another light before many days. And it would n't surprise me if Miss Varney had something to do with your change of views!

EDITH. [*Coming a little way toward* C.] You 're mistaken General Randolph—I think he 's perfectly right!

[THORNE *turns to* EDITH]

GENERAL RANDOLPH. [*Gruffly*] Oh you do eh! Very well—we 'll see what a little prison life will do. [*A sharp order*] Sergeant! [SERGEANT *comes down* R. C. *and salutes*] Report with the prisoner to Major Whitfield! [*Turns away to front*]

[SERGEANT *turns at once to* THORNE.—THORNE *and* EDITH *are looking into each other's eyes.*—THORNE *takes her hand and presses it against his breast*]

THORNE. [*Low voice to* EDITH] What is it—love and good-bye?

EDITH. [*Almost a whisper*] No no—only the first—and that one every day—every hour—every minute—until we meet again!

THORNE. Until we meet again!

SERGEANT. [R. C.] Fall in the Prisoner!

[THORNE *turns and walks up, quickly taking his place in the Squad.*—EDITH *follows him up a step or two as he goes, stopping a little* L. *of* C.]

SERGEANT. Attention! [*Squad comes to attention*] Carry—arms! [*Squad comes to carry*] Escort—left—face! [*Squad with* THORNE—*left face on the order*] Forward—march!

[*Escort with* THORNE *marches out at door up* L. C. *and off to* L.]

[CURTAIN]

MADAME BUTTERFLY

A TRAGEDY OF JAPAN

DRAMATIZED BY

David Belasco

From the Story by John Luther Long

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MADAME BUTTERFLY

Madame Butterfly represents the spirit of romance which has never been entirely absent from our stage and which seems to be in process of revival. It represents also the dramatic ability of Mr. David Belasco working with the material furnished by the imagination of Mr. John Luther Long.

David Belasco was born in San Francisco, July 25, 1853. Even before he left school in the early seventies his mind was on the theatre, and during the next few years he was callboy, actor, stage manager, adaptor, and writer of plays. Mr. Belasco wrote or adapted twenty-two plays during his career in California, beginning with *A Christmas Night,* in which he acted in the Geary Street Hall, San Francisco, and including his share in *The Moonlight Marriage* and *Hearts of Oak,* in which he collaborated with James A. Herne. *La Belle Russe,* which he put on first at the Baldwin Theatre, San Francisco, of which he was stage manager, attracted the attention of Eastern managers and was produced by Lester Wallack at his theatre, May 8, 1882. Shortly afterward Mr. Belasco became stage manager of the Madison Square Theatre in New York where his play, *May Blossom,* was produced April 12, 1884. After assisting Bronson Howard in *Baron Rudolph* in 1887, he became associated with Henry C. DeMille in the writing of a number of plays, all well constructed and entertaining, if at times verging on the sentimental and melodramatic. Of these *The Wife* was produced November 1, 1887, *Lord Chumley,* in which Mr. E. H. Sothern starred, on August 21, 1888, and *The Charity Ball,* November 19, 1889, all at the Lyceum Theatre, and all associated with the sterling group of players then gathered together there. *Men and Women,* also with DeMille, was produced at Proctor's Theatre, October 21, 1890. His next significant play was *The Girl I Left Behind Me,* with Mr. Franklin Fyles, produced at the Empire Theatre, January 25, 1893, and having its initial performance at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, January 6, 1893. *The Heart of Maryland,* in which Mrs. Leslie Carter starred at the Herald Square Theatre on October 22, 1895, represents the emotional melodrama of a popular kind, and *DuBarry,* played at the National Theatre in Washington, December 12, 1901, the melodrama based on historical material.

The next period of his work, and probably the most artistic, was that in which he was associated with Mr. John Luther Long in the field of exotic romance. On March 5, 1900, at the Herald Square Theatre, Mr. Belasco produced his dramatization of Mr. Long's story of *Madame Butterfly,* in a combination bill with his farce of *Naughty Anthony,* originally performed on

January 8th. After a month's run in New York, it was produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, April 28, 1900, and ran for over two months. During the next season, it was taken on tour throughout the United States. It was eventually put into the form of grand opera by Signor Giacomo Puccini. The play follows the language of the story almost entirely but there are certain changes in the plot. In the book, "Pinkerton" does not return to the house but leaves money with the consul for "Madame Butterfly," which she refuses. The interview between her and "Mrs. Pinkerton" takes place in the consul's office; and "Madame Butterfly" lets her mother love conquer and after attempting suicide decides to live.

Mr. Belasco and Mr. Long next collaborated in the writing of *Adrea*, a romantic tragedy laid in the fifth century, A.D., produced January 11, 1905, with a company headed by Mrs. Carter. On December 3, 1902, *The Darling of the Gods*, by Mr. Belasco and Mr. Long, was produced. This is the romantic tragedy of a Japanese princess, played by Blanche Bates, in which the themes of love, loyalty, and patriotism were artistically blended.

The Girl of the Golden West, played first, November 14, 1905, and *The Rose of the Rancho*, written with Mr. Richard Watson Tully, and played November 27, 1906, reflect Mr. Belasco's knowledge of the West. The supernatural romance was illustrated by *The Return of Peter Grimm*, played January 2, 1911. His last play, *Van Der Decken*, was first played at Wilmington, Delaware, December 12, 1915. A complete list of Mr. Belasco's plays since he came to New York would number twenty-five, including adaptations from the French, such as *Valerie*, from Sardou's *Fernande* (1886), *Miss Helyett* (1891), *Zaza* (1899), *The Lily* (1909), *The Secret* (1913), one from the German, *The Younger Son* (1893), and, to complete the list, *Naughty Anthony* (1900), *Sweet Kitty Belairs* (1903), *A Grand Army Man*, with Miss Pauline Phelps and Miss Marion Short (1907), and *The Son-Daughter*, with George Scarborough (1919).

Mr. Belasco's career as a manager can only be alluded to here. He was a pioneer in the movement toward natural methods in the theatre. Since 1905 he has produced his plays at his own theatre, where he has set a standard for perfection of detail, especially for interesting effects of stage lighting. He was the first to do away with footlights, and the "bridge of light" used in *Peter Grimm* was unheralded and unseen, but the effect was true to nature.

Mr. John Luther Long was born in Pennsylvania in 1861. He read law and was admitted to the bar, engaging in practice in Philadelphia. In addition to the plays noted above, he was one of the authors of *The Dragon Fly*, produced in Philadelphia in 1905. Mr. Long has published also a number of volumes of short stories.

The only play of Mr. Belasco's now published is *May Blossom*, by the Samuel French Company. For criticism of *Adrea* and *The Darling of the Gods* see

William Winter, *The Wallet of Time,* Vol. 2, pp. 252–7 and pp. 328–32. *Plays of the Present,* by J. B. Clapp and E. V. Edgett, will be found very useful for individual plays. See also, David Belasco, *My Life's Story* in *Hearst's Magazine,* beginning March, 1914; W. P. Eaton, *The American Stage of To-day,* pp. 203–14.

The story of *Madame Butterfly,* printed originally in the *Century Magazine* in 1897, has also been issued in book form. The play is now published for the first time through the courtesy of Mr. Belasco and Mr. Long from a manuscript prepared especially for this collection. For the information concerning the plays the editor is indebted to Mr. Belasco and to Mr. Thomas A. Curry of the Belasco Theatre.

Note to Revised Edition.

An authoritative life of David Belasco in two volumes was published in 1918 prepared by the late William Winter. Of especial interest is also *The Theatre Through the Stage Door,* by David Belasco, edited by L. V. De Foe, New York, 1919.

Note to Third Edition.

Since 1920, Mr. Belasco's dramatic work has consisted of adaptations of foreign plays, among which the most interesting were *Kiki,* from the French of André Picard (1921) and *Laugh, Clown, Laugh,* from the Italian of *Ridi, Pagliaccio,* of Fausti Martini (1923). On December 21, 1922, he presented Mr. David Warfield in a superb production of *The Merchant of Venice,* in which Mr. Belasco translated to a modern audience the beauty with which the Elizabethan imagination endowed the performances of Shakespeare. Mr. Belasco's contribution to the stage has been recognized by dinners tendered to him on March 20, 1921 by the Society of American Dramatists and Composers and on December 11, 1921 by the Society of Arts and Sciences, of New York. These occasions were made noteworthy by the tributes paid to him by representatives from every walk of life. In 1924, he was presented by the French Government with the decoration of "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur," in recognition of his services to the cause of France. *The Return of Peter Grimm* was published in *Modern American Plays,* edited by G. P. Baker, 1920.

Mr. Long's tragedy, *Crowns,* produced at the Provincetown Theatre in November, 1922, was an artistic creation, but failed to secure popular support. He died in 1927.

Note to Fourth Edition.

For detailed discussion of Mr. Belasco's plays, see "David Belasco and his Associates," in *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* Vol. 1, pp. 163–199.

THE ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

Herald Square Theatre, New York, March 5, 1900.

CHO-CHO-SAN (MADAME BUTTERFLY) ..... Miss Blanche Bates

SUZUKI, her servant ..... Miss Marie Bates

MR. SHARPLESS, the American Consul ..... Mr. Claude Gillingwater

LIEUTENANT B. F. PINKERTON, of the war ship *Connecticut* .. Mr. Frank Worthing

YAMADORI, a citizen of New York ..... Mr. Albert Bruning

THE NAKODO, a marriage broker ..... Mr. E. P. Wilks

KATE, PINKERTON'S wife ..... Miss Katherine Black

"TROUBLE" ..... Little Kittie

ATTENDANT ..... Mr. William Lamp

ATTENDANT ..... Mr. Westropp Saunders

NOTE: During the scene in which MADAME BUTTERFLY waits at the shoji for her lover, a night is supposed to pass and the story is resumed on the morning of the following day.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

The play takes place in Japan in MADAME BUTTERFLY'S *little house at the foot of Higashi Hill, facing the harbor. Everything in the room is Japanese save the American locks and bolts on the doors and windows and an American flag fastened to a tobacco jar. Cherry blossoms are abloom outside, and inside. A sword rack, a shrine on which lie a sword and a pair of men's slippers, a chest of drawers on top of which is a tray containing two red poppies, rouge, powder and hair ornaments, a stand for the tobacco jar and tea, are the only pieces of furniture in the room. As the curtain rises,* MADAME BUTTERFLY *is spraying the growing flowers with a small watering pot. She snips off two little bunches, lays them on a plate of rice which she sets reverently on the shrine, then kneels, putting her hands on the floor, her forehead on them.*

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Oh, Shaka! Hail! Hail! Also perceive! Look down! I have brought a sacrifice of flowers and new rice. Also, I am quite clean. I am shivering with cleanness. Therefore grant that Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton may come back soon.

(*She rises, clasps her hands, comes down to a floor cushion, and sits, fanning herself.*)

SUZUKI. (*Entering with a low bow.*) Madame Butterfly's wish?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Suzuki, inform me, if it please you, how much more nearer beggary we are today than yesterday?

SUZUKI. Aye. (*She takes some coins from a small box in her sleeve, and lays them in three piles on her palm, touching them as she speaks.*) Rin, yen, sen. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Reprovingly.*) Suzuki, how many time I tellin' you—no one shall speak anythin' but those Unite' State' languages in these Lef-ten-ant Pik-ker-ton's house? (*She pronounces his name with much difficulty.*) Once more—an' I put you outside shoji! . . . That 's one thin' aeverbody got recomlec' account it 's 'Merican house—his wife, his maid.

SUZUKI. (*Mouthing to herself, making no sound, counting on her fingers.*) Two dollar.

(*She drops the money into the box, giving it to* MADAME BUTTERFLY.)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, how we waste my husban's be-autiful moaneys! Tha 's shame! Mos' gone.

SUZUKI. This moaney hav' kep' us two year . . . Wha 's happen to us now, if he don' come back?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Scoffing, putting the money in her sleeve.*) O, if he don' come back! . . . Course he come back! He 's gone so long accoun' he 's got business in those his large country. If he 's not come back to his house, why he sign Japanese lease for nine hundred and ninety nine year for me to live? Why he put 'Merican lock to bolt it door, to shut it window? Answer me those question.

SUZUKI. (*Doubtfully.*) I dunno.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Of course you dunno! You don' know whichaever. Wael I goin' tell you: to keep out those which are out, and in, those which are in. Tha 's me.

(*She rises, goes to the window and looks out.*)

SUZUKI. But he don't writin' no ledder.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. 'Merican men don' naever write ledder—no time.

SUZUKI. (*Cynically.*) Aye . . . I don' naever know 'Merica navy man with Japanese wive come back.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Impassively, her eyes narrowing.*) Speak concerning marriage once more, you die! (*She fans herself.* SUZUKI *salaams and backs quickly towards the door.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *claps her hands and* SUZUKI *pauses.*) Don' come back! Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton don' come back! Ha! Me! I know w'en he comes back—he told me. W'en he goin' 'way, he say in tha's doors: "Madame Butterfly, I have had ver' nice times with my Japanese

sweets heart, so now I goin' back to my own country and here's moaney—an' don' worry 'bout me—I come back w'en 'Robins nes' again!'" Ha-ha! Tha's w'en he come back—w'en robins nes' again.

(*She sways her head triumphantly from side to side, fanning herself.*)

SUZUKI. (*Not impressed.*) Yaes, I did n't like ways he said it—like those . . .

(*She imitates a flippant gesture of farewell.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Laughing.*) Aha, that's 'Merican way sayin' good-bye to girl. Yaes, he come back w'en robins nes' again. Shu'h! Shu'h! (*She claps her hands with delight.* SUZUKI, *with a look of unbelief starts to go.*) Sa-ey! Why no "shu'h" on you face for? Such a fools! (*Looking towards the window.*) O look! Suzuki—a robins. The firs' these Spring! Go, see if he's stay for nes'.

SUZUKI. (*Looking.*) It *is* a robins, O Cho-Cho-San!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Running to the window.*) O! O!

SUZUKI. But he's fly away.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O! How they are slow this year! Sa-ey, see if you don' fin' one tha's more in-dus-trial an' domestics.

SUZUKI. (*Looking out.*) There are none yet.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. But soon they nes' now. Suzuki, w'en we see that ship comin' in—sa-ey—then we goin' put flowers aevery where, an' if it's night, we goin' hang up mos' one thousan' lanterns—eh-ha?

SUZUKI. No got moaney for thousan'.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Wael, twenty, mebby; an' sa-ey, w'en we see him comin' quick up path—(*imitates*) so—so—so—(*lifts her kimono and strides in a masculine fashion*) to look for liddle wive—me—me jus' goin' hide behind shoji (*making two holes with her wet finger in the low paper shoji and peeking through*) an' watch an' make believe me gone 'way; leave liddle note—sayin': "Goon-bye, sayonara, Butterfly." . . . Now he come in. . . . (*Hides.*) Ah! An' then he get angery! An' he say all kinds of 'Merican languages—debbils—hells! But before he get too angery, me run out an' flew aroun' his neck! (*She illustrates with* SUZUKI, *who is carried away and embraces her with fervor.*) Sa-ey! *You* no flew roun' his neck—jus' me. (*They laugh in each other's arms.*) Then he'll sit down an' sing tha's liddle 'Merican song—O, how he'll laugh. . . . (*She sings as though not understanding a word of it.*)

"I call her the belle of Japan—of Japan
Her name it is O Cho-Cho-San, Cho-Cho-San!
Such tenderness lies in her soft almond eyes,
I tell you, she's just 'ichi ban.'"

(*Laughs.*) Then I'll dance like w'en I was Geisha girl.

(*She dances as* SHARPLESS, *the American consul, appears in the doorway, followed by the* NAKODO.)

NAKODO. This is the house, your Excellency.

SHARPLESS. (*Removing his clogs outside.*) You may wait.

(NAKODO *bows and* SHARPLESS *enters.*)

I beg pardon. . . .

(MADAME BUTTERFLY *still dancing, begins the song again.* SHARPLESS *goes to the door and knocks to attract her attention.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ah!

(SUZUKI, *bowing low, leaves the room.*)

SHARPLESS. This is Madame Cho-Cho-San?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, I am Mrs. Left-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton.

SHARPLESS. I see. . . . Pardon my interruption. . . . I am Mr. Sharpless, the American consul.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Once more salaaming to the ground, drawing in her breath between her teeth to express pleasure.*) O, your honorable excellency, goon night,—no, not night yaet: aexcuse me, I'm liddle raddle',—I mean goon mornin', goon evenin'. Welcome to 'Merican house, mos' welcome to 'Merican girl! (*Pointing to herself. They both bow.*) Be seat. (SHARPLESS *sits on a cushion on the floor, and* MADAME BUTTERFLY *sits at a little distance. There is a slight pause.*) How are those health? You sleepin' good? How are that honorable ancestors—are they well? And those parens'? That grandmother—how are she?

SHARPLESS. Thanks. They're all doing well, I hope.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*She claps her hands;* SUZUKI *enters and puts the little stand between them and leaves the room.*) Accep' pipe, your excellency. O, I for-

gettin'—I have still of those large American cigarette.

(MADAME BUTTERFLY *gestures towards* PINKERTON'S *tobacco jar decorated with the flag of his country.*)

SHARPLESS. (*Accepting a cigarette while she fills her pipe.*) Thanks. I'm on a little visit of inquiry, Madame Butterfly,—your name, I believe in our language. Lieutenant Pinkerton wrote to me to find out—

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Almost breathless.*) Ah, you have hear from him? He is well?

SHARPLESS. O, he's all right.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Relieved.*) Ah! Tha's mak' me mos' bes' happy female woman in Japan—mebby in that whole worl'—w'at you thing?

SHARPLESS. Ha—ha! (*Puffing at the cigarette.*) Sawdust. Pinkerton must have left these!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O! I so glad you came. . . . I goin' as' you a liddle question.

SHARPLESS. Well?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You know 'bout birds in those your country?

SHARPLESS. Something.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's what I thing —you know aeverything. Tha's why your country sen' you here.

SHARPLESS. You flatter me.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, no, you got big head.

SHARPLESS. Pinkerton again—I can hear him!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, aexcuse me: I forgettin' my manners. I got liddle more raddle. (*She offers him her pipe which he gravely touches, returning it. She touches it again, then puts it down.*) Now, what you know 'bout jus' robins?

SHARPLESS. What?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. 'Bout when do they nes' again? Me, I thing it mus' be mor' early in Japan as in America, accoun' they nestin' here now.

SHARPLESS. O, at the same time I fancy.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Disappointed.*) Yaes? . . . then they's nestin' there. (*Then taking hope again.*) Sa-ey, I tell you—perhaps some time sooner, some time later, jus' how they feel like.

SHARPLESS. Possibly. Why do you ask?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Because Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton say he will come back to me w'en the robins nes' again.

SHARPLESS. (*To himself.*) Poor devil! One of his infernal jokes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Clapping her hands.*) Me, I thing it's time. . . . I've wait so long.

(SUZUKI *enters with a tea-pot.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *gives* SHARPLESS *a cup of tea.*)

NAKODO. (*Appearing at the door.*) Tea, most illustrious?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ah! Enter, Nakodo. Your presence lights up my entire house. (*She gives him a cup. Accepting it, he goes up to a cushion and sits.*) Tha's bad man. W'en my husban's gone 'way, he try for get me marry again.

NAKODO. The rich Yamadori. Madame Cho-Cho-San is very poor.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Bowing politely.*) O, liddle ol' frien'; those are my business.

NAKODO. Rejected advice makes the heart sad.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. We-el, if those heart hurt you so much, you better not arrive here no more.

SHARPLESS. Madame Butterfly; may I ask—er—where are your people?

NAKODO. They have outcasted her!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Sa-ey, tha's foanny! My people make me marry when I don' want; now I am marry, they don' want. Before I marry Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pikker-ton, my honorable Father—(*she bows low*—NAKODO *bows*—SHARPLESS *bows*) die—he's officer. These are his sword . . . (*pointing to an inscription*) 't is written. . . .

(*She holds out the sword that the inscription may be read.*)

NAKODO. (*Reading.*) "To die with honor, when one can no longer live with honor."

(*He bows, then turns and bows towards the shrine and goes back to his cushion where he sits.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He's kill' himself accoun' he soldier of Emporer an' defeat in battle. Then we get—O—ver' poor. Me? I go dance liddle. Also I thing if some rich man wish me, I gettin' marry for while, accoun' my grandmother, (*she bows respectfully*—NAKODO *bows*—SHARPLESS *politely nods*) don' got no food, no obi. Then ol' Nakodo, he say a (NAKODO *picks up his cushion and moves down to join in the conversation*) man's jus' as' him for nice wive for three monse. Nakodo tell him he don' know none more nizer as me.

NAKODO. (*Salaaming.*) Nizer as you.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Salaaming.*) Nizer as me.

SHARPLESS. (*Looking from one to the other.*) Could n't be nicer! . . .

(*He salaams profoundly—then all salaam.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Then Nakodo say—

NAKODO. I say—I don' lig him account he 'Merica—jin.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He also remark with me that he is barbarian an' beas'. But aeveryone say: "Yaes, take him—take him beas'—he 's got moaneys." So I say for jus' liddle while, perhaps I can stan'. So Nakodo bring him. . . .

NAKODO. . . . For look-at meeting.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Laughing.*) Me? Well, I thing that day Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton is jus' a god! Gold button—lace on his unicorn. At firs', I frightened—he hol' my hans' so close—like—(*she illustrates by giving both hands to* SHARPLESS) and kizz. Japanese girl no lig' kizz; but when Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton kizz me, I like ver' much. . . . What 's use lie? It 's not inside of me. (*Noticing that her hands are still in* SHARPLESS'.) O, I beg your honorable pardon. (*She tucks her hands in her sleeves.*) So we 's gettin' marry and then his ship order away an' me—I am jus' waitin'—sometimes cryin', sometimes watchin', but always waitin'.

NAKODO. (*In the doorway—bowing with servility.*) My client, the prosperous Yamadori, approaches for the third time today.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Now I have my liddle joke again. You watch, he comes all time to make smash with me.

SHARPLESS. Pinkerton's slang.

(YAMADORI *enters attended by two servants.* SHARPLESS *rises and bows ceremoniously.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *does not rise, but bends her head and fans herself coquettishly. The two servants squat.*)

YAMADORI. Mr. Sharpless: always a pleasure to meet you here or in New York.

SHARPLESS. Thanks, Mr. Yamadori.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Coquettishly.*) You have somethin' nize say to me again today?

YAMADORI. Perseverance shall be the religion of my life until the capricious Butterfly deigns to believe me.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You goin' tell me 'gain you kill yourself I don' make kizz with you?

YAMADORI. (*Very much embarrassed—looking at consul.*) O!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You can speak—consul know—I been tellin' him 'bout your liddle foolishness.

YAMADORI. Such treatment, Mr. Sharpless, is one of the penalties we incur when madly in love with a charming woman.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha 's ver' nize. Ha-ha!

(*Winks behind her fan at* SHARPLESS.)

SHARPLESS. Heavens! Pinkerton's very wink.

(MADAME BUTTERFLY *gives a cup of tea to* YAMADORI *who drinks it and rolls a cigarette.*)

YAMADORI. (*To* SHARPLESS.) I am in Japan for two months—a pleasure trip. Do you blame me?

(*Pointing to* MADAME BUTTERFLY.)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Aevery time he come home, get 'nother woman: must have mor'en eight now.

YAMADORI. But I *married* them all. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O *he!* He jus' marry whenaever he thing 'bout it.

YAMADORI. You shall be different. I will bury *you* with my ancestors. (*To* SHARPLESS.) I offered her a thousand servants.

NAKODO. (*Stunned.*) Thousan'!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ha! (*Fans.*)

YAMADORI. And a palace to live in.

(*The* NAKODO *is overcome by such generosity.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He!

YAMADORI. Everything her heart can wish.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ha! Ha!

YAMADORI. Is that not enough? (*She shakes her head.*) Then in the presence of this statesman of integrity, I will give you a solemn writing. (SHARPLESS *gives him a quizzical glance.*) Is *that* enough?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Wha 's good of that to married womans?

(*Pointing to herself.*)

YAMADORI. According to the laws of Japan, when a woman is deserted, she is divorced. (MADAME BUTTERFLY *stops fanning and listens.*) Though I have travelled much abroad, I know the laws of my own country.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. An' I know laws of my *husban's* country.

YAMADORI. (*To* SHARPLESS.) She still fancies herself married to the young officer. If your excellency would explain. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*To* SHARPLESS.) Sa-ey, when some one gettin' married in America, don' he stay marry?

SHARPLESS. Usually—yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Well, tha 's all right. I 'm marry to Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton.

YAMADORI. Yes, but a Japanese marriage!

SHARPLESS. Matrimony is a serious thing in America, not a temporary affair as it often is here.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yaes, an' you can't like 'Merican mans. Japanese got too many wive, eh?

SHARPLESS. (*Laughing.*) We are not allowed more than one at a time.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yaes, an' you can't divorce wive like here, by sayin': "walk it back to parent"—eh??

SHARPLESS. O, no.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha 's right, aexactly. When I as' Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton, he explain those law to me of gettin' divorce in those Unite' State'. He say no one can get aexcept he stan' up before Judge 2—3—4—7—year. Ver' tiresome. Firs' the man he got tell those Judge all he know 'bout womans; then womans, she got tell; then some lawyer quarrel with those Judge; the Judge get jury an' as' wha' they thing—an' if they don' know, they 'll all get put in jails. Tha 's all right! (*Folds hands.*)

YAMADORI. Your friend has told her everything she wanted him to tell her.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Who has paid no attention.*) Tha 's ver' nize, too, that 'Merican God.

SHARPLESS. I beg your pardon?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Once times, Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton—

YAMADORI. (*Aside to* SHARPLESS.) Pinkerton again!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He 's in great troubles, an' he said "God he'p me"; an' sunshine *came right out*—and God he did! Tha 's ver' quick—Japanese gods take more time. Aeverything quick in America. Ha—me—sometime I thing I pray large American God to get him back soon; but no use,—he don' know me where *I* live. (*Attracted by a sound.*) Wha 's that? . . . You hear?

SHARPLESS. No. (MADAME BUTTERFLY *runs to the window and listens; then takes up the glasses while* SHARPLESS *speaks in a low voice to* YAMADORI.) Lieutenant Pinkerton's ship was due yesterday. His young wife from America is waiting here to meet him. (*At the word "wife,"* YAMADORI *smiles—takes his fan from his sleeve and fans himself. The* NAKODO, *who is listening, is struck by an idea and departs in such haste that he tumbles over one of* YAMADORI'S *attendants who jabbers at him.*) I 'm devilish sorry for that girl.

YAMADORI. Then tell her the truth.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Aexcuse me; but I always hearin' soun' like ship gun—ha—ha—tha 's naturels.

YAMADORI. (*Preparing to go.*) Good morning, Mr. Sharpless. (*Shaking hands. Turning to* MADAME BUTTERFLY.) I leave you today. Tomorrow the gods may prompt you to listen to me! (*He bows.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Bowing.*) Mebby. (YAMADORI *and attendants go off, bowing. She turns to* SHARPLESS.) Mebby not. Sa-ey, somehow could n't you let that Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton know they 's other all crazy 'bout me?

SHARPLESS. Madame Butterfly, sit down. (*While she, struck by his solemn manner, looks at him and obeys, he removes the tea-pot and sits on the stand, to the astonishment of* MADAME BUTTERFLY.) I am going to read you part of a letter I have received from Pinkerton.

(*He takes a letter from his pocket.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, jus' let me look at those ledder! (*She slips it under her kimono on her heart and with an indrawn breath, hands it back.*) Now read quick, you mos' bes' nize man in all the whole worl'.

SHARPLESS. (*Reads.*) "Find out about that little Jap girl. What has become of her? It might be awkward now. If little Butterfly still remembers me, perhaps you can help me out and make her understand. Let her down gently. You won't believe it, but for two weeks after I sailed, I was dotty in love with her."

(SHARPLESS *is amazed to see* MADAME BUTTERFLY *convulsed with silent joy.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Oh, all the gods how it was sweet!

SHARPLESS. Why really—

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha 's what I 'm afraid: that he loave' me so much he 's goin' desert his country an' get in trouble

with American eagle—what you thing? Oh, it 's more bedder I wait than those!

SHARPLESS. (*Folding the letter.*) No use—you can't understand. Madame Butterfly, suppose this waiting should never end; what would become of you?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Me? I could dance, mebby, or—die?

SHARPLESS. Don't be foolish. I advise you to consider the rich Yamadori's offer.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Astonished.*) *You* say those? You, 'Merican consul?—when you know that me, I am marry?

SHARPLESS. You heard Yamadori: it is not binding.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yamadori lies!

SHARPLESS. His offer is an unusual opportunity for a girl who—for any Japanese girl in your circumstances.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Enraged—she claps her hands.*) Suzuki! The excellent gentleman—(*bowing sarcastically*) who have done us the honor to call—he wish to go hurriedly. His shoes—hasten them!

(SUZUKI, *who has entered carrying a jar, gets* SHARPLESS' *clogs and gives them to him—then passes off with her jar.*)

SHARPLESS. (*Holding the clogs awkwardly.*) I 'm really very sorry.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, no, don' be angery. But jus' now you tol' me—O, gods! You mean— (*Looks at him pitifully.*) I not Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-kerton's wive—Me?

SHARPLESS. Hardly.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, I— (*She sways slightly.* SHARPLESS *goes to her assistance, but she recovers and fans herself.*) Tha 's all right. I got liddle heart illness. I can't . . . I can't someways give up thingin' he 'll come back to me. You thing tha 's all over? All finish? (*Dropping her fan.* SHARPLESS *nods assent.*) Oh, no! Loave don' forget some thin's or wha 's use of loave? (*She claps her hands—beckoning off.*) Loave 's got remember . . . (*pointing*) some thin's!

(*A child enters.*)

SHARPLESS. A child. . . . Pinkerton's? . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Showing a picture of* PINKERTON'S.) Look! Look! (*Holding it up beside the child's face.*) Tha 's jus' his face, same hair, same blue eye. . . .

SHARPLESS. Does Lieutenant Pinkerton know?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, he come after he goe. (*Looking at the child with pride.*) You thing fath-er naever comes back—tha 's what *you* thing? He do! You write him ledder; tell him 'bout one bes' mos' nize bebby aever seen. . . . Ha—ha! I bed all moaneys he goin' come mos' one million mile for see those chil'. Surely this is tie—bebby. Sa-ey, you did n' mean what you said 'bout me not bein' marry? You make liddle joke? (*Moved,* SHARPLESS *nods his head in assent, to the great relief of* MADAME BUTTERFLY.) Ha! (*She lays the baby's hand in* SHARPLESS'.) Shake hand consul 'Merican way.

SHARPLESS. (*Shaking hands with the child.*) Hm . . . hm . . . what 's your name?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Trouble. Japanese bebby always change it name. I was thinkin' some day w'en he come back, change it to Joy.

SHARPLESS. Yes . . . yes . . . I 'll let him know.

(*Glad to escape, he takes an abrupt departure.*)

SUZUKI. (*In the distance, wailing.*) Ay . . . ay . . . ay . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha 's wail . . .

SUZUKI. (*Nearer.*) O, Cho-Cho-San! (MADAME BUTTERFLY *goes to the door to meet* SUZUKI.) Cho-Cho-San!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Speak!

SUZUKI. We are shamed through the town. The Nakodo—

NAKODO. (*Appearing.*) I but said the child—(*he points to the baby, whom* MADAME BUTTERFLY *instinctively shelters in her arms*) was a badge of shame to his father. In his country, there are homes for such unfortunates and they never rise above the stigma of their class. They are shunned and cursed from birth.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Who has listened stolidly—now with a savage cry, pushing him away from her until he loses his balance and falls to the floor.*) You lie!

NAKODO. (*On the floor.*) But Yamadori—

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Touching her father's sword.*) Lies! Lies! Lies! Say again, I kill! Go . . . (*The* NAKODO *goes quickly.*) Bebby, he lies. . . . Yaes, it 's lie. . . . When your fath-er knows how they speak, he will take us 'way from bad people to his own country.

I am finish here. (*Taking the American flag from the tobacco jar and giving it to the child.*) Tha 's your country—your flag. Now wave like fath-er say w'en excite—wave like "hell!" (*Waves the child's hand.*) Ha'rh! Ha'rh! (*A ship's gun is heard.*) Ah! (MADAME BUTTERFLY *and* SUZUKI *start for the balcony.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *runs back for the child as the gun is heard again; then returning to the shoji, looks through the glasses.*) Look! Look! Warship! Wait . . . can't see name. . . .

SUZUKI. Let me—

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No! Ah! Name is "Con-nec-ti-cut"! His ship! He 's come back! He 's come back! (*Laughing, she embraces* SUZUKI—*then sinks to the floor.*) He 's come back! Those robins nes' again an' we did n' know! O, bebby, bebby—your fath-er come back! Your fath-er 's come back! O! O! (*Shaking a bough of cherry blossoms, which fall on them both.*) This is the bes' nize momen' since you was borned. Now your name 's Joy! Suzuki; the Moon Goddess sent that bebby straight from Bridge of Heaven to make me courage to wait so long.

SUZUKI. Ah, ship 's in. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Rising in great excitement.*) Hoarry, Suzuki, his room. (SUZUKI *pulls out a screen to form a little room.*) We mus' hoarry—(*Picking flowers from the pots and decorating the room*) like we got eagle's wings an' thousan' feets. His cigarettes. (*Setting the jar in the room.*) His slipper. (SUZUKI *gets them from the shrine.*) His chair, Suzuki—hustle! (SUZUKI *hastens off.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *shakes a cushion and drops it on the floor.*) His bed. (SUZUKI *enters with a steamer chair, which she places upside down.*) Now his room fixed! (SUZUKI *closes the shoji.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *adjusts the chair and sets the lanterns about the room.*) Bring me my wides' obi, kanzashi for my hair, poppies—mus' look ver' pretty!

SUZUKI. Rest is bes' beauty. He not come yet. Sleep liddle firs'. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, no time. (*Taking up a small mirror and looking critically at herself.*) He mus' see me look mos' pretty ever. You thing I change since he went away—not so beauty? (SUZUKI *is silent.*) W'at? . . . I am! (*Brandishing the mirror.*) Say so!

SUZUKI. Perhaps you rest liddle, once more you get so pretty again.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. *Again?* . . .

SUZUKI. Trouble, tha 's make change. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Moach change. (*Still looking in the glass.*) No, I am no more pretty—an' he come soon. (*On her knees in front of* SUZUKI—*resting her forehead on the maid's feet.*) Ah, Suzuki, be kin' with me—make me pretty . . . don' say you can't—you moas'. An' tomorrow, the gods will. Ah, yes! You can—you can—you got to! Bring powder, comb, rouge, henna, fix it hair like on wedding day. (SUZUKI *brings the toilet articles and they sit on the floor.* SUZUKI *puts the poppies and pins in* MADAME BUTTERFLY'S *hair, and she, in turn, dresses the baby, enveloping him in an obi, so wide that it almost covers the child.*) Now, bebby, when you cry, he 'll sing you those liddle 'Merican song he sing me when I cry—song all 'Merican sing for bebby. (*Sitting with the baby in front of her, swaying it by the arms, she sings.*)

"Rog' a bye bebby,
Off in Japan,
You jus' a picture,
Off of a fan."

(SUZUKI *has found it very difficult to finish the toilet, but at last she accomplishes it.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *lifts the baby up, gives it a doll, then touches it with rouge and adds a final dash of rouge to her own face.*) Now for watch for pa-pa!

(*Putting the flag in the child's hand, she takes it up to the window and makes three holes in the shoji, one low down for the baby. As the three look through the shoji, they form the picture she has already described.*)

(*During the vigil, the night comes on.* SUZUKI *lights the floor lamps, the stars come out, the dawn breaks, the floor lights flicker out one by one, the birds begin to sing, and the day discovers* SUZUKI *and the baby fast asleep on the floor; but* MADAME BUTTERFLY *is awake, still watching, her face white and strained. She reaches out her hands and rouses* SUZUKI.)

SUZUKI. (*Starting to her feet, surprised*

and looking about the room.) He no come?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No. . . .

SUZUKI. (*Pityingly.*) Oh!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*With an imperious gesture.*) No "Oh"! He will come. . . . Bring fresh flowers. (*She collects the lanterns as* SUZUKI *brings in fresh flowers.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *tears up the roses and throws their leaves in Pinkerton's room. Then pointing to the upper part of the house.*) Now I watch from liddle look out place. (*She picks up the child whose doll drops from its hand.* Have mos' bes' nize breakfas' ready w'en he come.

(*She leaves the room and* SUZUKI *goes to prepare the breakfast.*)

(*The stage is empty. Very faintly a strain of "I call her the Belle of Japan" is heard.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *is singing that she may not weep. A pause. Some one knocks on the door.* LIEUTENANT PINKERTON'S *voice calls outside the shoji.*)

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Madame Butterfly? Madame Butterfly? (*Coming into the room, he looks about.*) Butterfly?

SHARPLESS. (*Following him.*) They 've seen the ship—these decorations were not here when I called.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Singing to hush the baby.*)

"Rog'—a—bye, bebby,
Off in Japan,"

(LIEUTENANT PINKERTON *listens to the song coming from above.*)

"You jus' a picture,
Off of a fan."

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. She is watching the ship. (*Noticing the screened off part of the room.*) My room . . . just as it used to look . . . my chair. (*Picking up the doll which the child has dropped.*) Poor kid! Poor little devil! . . . Sharpless, I thought when I left this house, the few tears, sobs, little polite regrets, would be over as I crossed the threshold. I started to come back for a minute, but I said to myself: "Don't do it; by this time she 's ringing your gold pieces to make sure they 're good." You know that class of Japanese girl and—

SHARPLESS. (*Seeing* NAKODO *who is at the shoji.*) Look here: I have something to settle with you! (NAKODO *comes in cautiously.*) Why did you seek out my friend's wife at the pier?

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Why did you tell her that story—the child and all? Answer me?

NAKODO. (*To* SHARPLESS.) Your Excellency, I but thought if trouble came between the two women, he would surely break with Cho-Cho-San, and then she would be glad to marry the rich Yamadori and I get big fee. (*Exit.*)

SHARPLESS. You 'll never get it. (*To* PINKERTON.) She 'll starve first.

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Sharpless, thank God, that 's one thing I can do—money.

(*He takes out an envelope containing some money.*)

SHARPLESS. What did your wife say, Pinkerton?

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Well, it was rather rough on her,—only married four months. Sharpless, my Kate 's an angel, —she offered to take the child . . . made me promise I 'd speak of it to Butterfly.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Calling from above.*) Suzuki?

SHARPLESS. She 's coming.

(PINKERTON *instinctively draws behind the screen.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Coming down the stairs with the sleeping baby on her back, calling.*) Suzuki? Come for bebby. (*Kissing the child.*) Nize liddle eye, pick out of blue sky, all shut up.

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. (*Aside to* SHARPLESS, *his eyes fixed on the mother and child.*) I can't face it! I 'm going. Give her the money.

SUZUKI. (*Entering, and seeing* PINKERTON *as he passes out of the door.*) Ah!

(SHARPLESS *gives her a warning gesture.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Seeing* SUZUKI'S *astonished face.*) Wha'—? (*She puts the baby in* SUZUKI'S *arms.* SUZUKI *goes out quickly.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *sees the Consul.*) You! Oh! (*Joyously.*) You seen him?

SHARPLESS. Yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. An' you tole him?

SHARPLESS. Well . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. But you tole him . . . of bebby?

SHARPLESS. Yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Wiping her dry lips.*) Yaes . . . tha 's right. Tha 's

what I—as' you do . . . an'—an' what he *say?*

SHARPLESS. Well . . . (*Taking out the envelope, and giving her the money which she takes without looking at it.*) He said—er—he was crazy to see you and—(*Aside*) What the devil can I say! (*To her.*) You know he can't leave the ship just yet. (*Pointing to the package in her hand.*) That is in remembrance of the past. He wishes you to be always happy, to have the best of luck; he hopes to see you soon—and—

(*The lies die out on his lips.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Bending and kissing his hand.*) All—all the gods in the heavens bless you!

(*Overcome, she staggers.* SHARPLESS *catches her, puts her into the chair—she leans against him—her face upraised, her eyes closed.*)

(KATE, *entering hurriedly.*)

KATE. Has Lieutenant Pinkerton gone? Has my husband been here?

(MADAME BUTTERFLY *hears and opens her eyes.*)

SHARPLESS. For God's sake—(*He looks at* MADAME BUTTERFLY *whose eyes are fixed on his with a look of despair.*) Come, we can overtake him.

KATE (*In a lower voice.*) Did he speak to her of the—

SHARPLESS. No.

KATE. Then I will ask. (*For the first time seeing* MADAME BUTTERFLY.) Is this—(SHARPLESS *nods and goes. There is a short pause, while the two women look at each other, then* MADAME BUTTERFLY, *still seated, slowly bows her head.*) Why, you poor little thing . . . who in the world could blame you or . . . call you responsible . . . you pretty little plaything.

(*Takes* MADAME BUTTERFLY *in her arms.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Softly.*) No—playthin' . . . I am Mrs. Lef-ten-ant B. F.—No—no—now I am, only—Cho-Cho-San, but no playthin'. . . . (*She rises, then impassively.*) How long you been marry?

KATE. Four months. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Counting on her fingers.*) Oh . . . four.

KATE. Won't you let me do something for the child? Where is he? (MADAME BUTTERFLY *gestures toward the next room.* KATE, *seeing the child.*) Ah! The dear little thing! May I—

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No! Can look . . . no can touch. . . .

KATE. Let us think first of the child. For his own good . . . let me take him home to my country. . . . I will do all I would do for my own.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Showing no emotion.*) He not know then—me—his mother?

KATE. It 's hard, very hard, I know; but would it not be better?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. (*Taking the money box from her sleeve, and giving the coins to* KATE.) Tha 's his . . . two dollar. All tha 's lef' of his moaneys. . . . I shall need no more. . . . (*She hands* KATE *the envelope which* SHARPLESS *has just given.*) I lig if you also say I sawry—no—no—*no*—glad—*glad!* I wish him that same happiness lig he wish for me . . . an' tell him . . . I shall be happy . . . mebby. Thang him . . . Mister B. F. Pik-ker-ton for also that kindness he have been unto me . . . an' permit me to thang *you,* augustness, for that same. . . . You—you mos' bes' lucky girl in these whole worl'. . . . Goon-night—

(*She stands stolidly with her eyes closed.*)

KATE. (*Wiping her eyes.*) But the child?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Come back fifteen minute. . . . (*With closed eyes, she bows politely.*) Sayonara. (KATE *reluctantly goes.*) God he'p me, but no sun kin shine. (SUZUKI, *who has listened, sinks at* MADAME BUTTERFLY'S *feet.*) Don' cry, Suzuki, liddle maiden . . . accoun' I dizappoint, a liddle dizappoint'—don' cry. . . . (*Running her hand over* SUZUKI'S *head—as she kneels.*) Tha 's short while ago you as' me res'—sleep. . . . (*Wearily.*) Well—go way an' I will res' now. . . . I *wish* res'—sleep . . . long sleep . . . an' when you see me again, I pray you look whether I be not beautiful again . . . as a bride.

SUZUKI. (*Understanding, sobbing.*) No—no—no.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. So that I suffer no more—goon bye, liddle maiden. (SUZUKI *does not go.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *claps her hands, and sobbing,* SUZUKI *leaves the room.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *bolts the shoji, and the door, lights fresh incense before the shrine, takes down her*

father's sword and reads the inscription:) "To die with honor . . . when one can no longer live with honor." . . .

(*She draws her finger across the blade, to test the sharpness of the sword, then picks up the hand glass, puts on more rouge, re-arranges the poppies in her hair, bows to the shrine, and is about to press the blade of the sword against her neck, when the door is opened and the child is pushed into the room by* SUZUKI, *who keeps out of sight.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *drops the sword and takes the baby in her arms. A knocking is heard but she pays no heed. She sets the child on a mat, puts the American flag in its hand, and picking up the sword, goes behind the screen that the child may not see what she is about to do. A short pause—the sword is heard to drop.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *reappears, her face deathly—a scarf about her neck to conceal the wound.* SUZUKI *opens the door, sees the face of her mistress—backs out of the room in horror.* MADAME BUTTERFLY *drops to her knees as she reaches the child, and clasps it to her. A hand is thrust through the shoji and the bolt is drawn.*)

(KATE *enters quickly urging the reluctant* PINKERTON *to follow her.*)

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. (*Discerning what she has done.*) Oh! Cho-Cho-San!

(*He draws her to him with the baby pressed to her heart. She waves the child's hand which holds the flag —saying faintly.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Too bad those robins did n' nes' again. (*She dies.*)

HER GREAT MATCH

BY

Clyde Fitch

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HER GREAT MATCH

Her Great Match represents the international play of to-day. It stands also for social comedy and it is representative of the work of its author in his best period.

Clyde Fitch was born in Elmira, New York, May 2, 1865. His father was a captain in the United States Army during the Civil War. He attended the Holderness School, New Hampshire, and graduated from Amherst College in 1886, and was already noteworthy in his college days for his interest in costume and rather luxurious accessories of life. He determined from the beginning to devote himself to the stage, and settled in New York, supporting himself by giving readings and tutoring while waiting for recognition. This came first when Richard Mansfield produced his *Beau Brummell* at the Madison Square Theatre, May 17, 1890. This picture of the Georgian dandy remains one of his most characteristic conceptions. Notwithstanding the success of this play and that of *Frédérick Lemaître* (1890), in which Henry Miller starred, Fitch had to wait and work hard before he attained a secure footing. He succeeded, however, in becoming probably the most prolific and the most successful of American playwrights. He was indefatigable in his exertions and produced in twenty years thirty-three original plays, besides twenty-two that were either adaptations from the French or German, revisions of other men's work, or dramatizations of novels. He lived surrounded by every luxury, and he made frequent trips to Europe, and died at Châlons-sur-Marne, September 4, 1909. At the time of his death, three plays, *The City, A Modern Marriage,* and *The Manicure Girl,* were in rehearsal.

The early work of Clyde Fitch was tentative, but when he produced *The Climbers,* January 15, 1901, he entered upon a more definite period of workmanship, and showed himself a master in delineation of the actions and motives of people moving in social relations. This social consciousness had been in his work from the first, but *Beau Brummell* is not so significant since it reflected the manners of an earlier day in England, and was a play of types rather than real people. What is of the most significance, Fitch did not limit himself to social satire; his greatest plays have in them a central idea, which unifies the drama and gives it body. In *The Stubbornness of Geraldine,* played after a tryout in New Haven, at the Garrick Theatre, New York, November 3, 1902, by Mary Mannering,—the theme is the fidelity and trust of a woman for the man she loves In *The Girl with the Green Eyes,* produced by Clara Bloodgood in the leading rôle at the Savoy Theatre, New York, December 25, 1902, the central idea is that

of jealousy and its terrible effects. In *The Truth,* tried out in Cleveland, Ohio, in October, 1906, and later played in New York with Clara Bloodgood as "Becky" and in London in 1907 with Marie Tempest in the same part, there is a masterly study of the effects of lying on the part of a woman who is not inherently bad but who is incapable of resisting the temptation of the moment to prevaricate. In *The City,* produced after his death, on December 21, 1909, at the Lyric Theatre, New York City, there is a study of the effect upon people coming to the city from a small town where they have been the principal family for many years. Even in plays that are more frankly melodrama, such as *The Woman in the Case* (1904), there was a well conceived unity of action since the theme turned upon the devotion of a wife to a husband who has been accused of murder, and of her saving him by her association with a woman of doubtful reputation who holds the key to his release.

Fitch varied his social study with an international setting in *The Coronet of a Duchess* (1904) and in *Her Great Match,* and he wrote several plays which had an historical interest. Of these *Nathan Hale,* played first in Chicago, January 31, 1898, and *Major André* (1903), were tragedies of the Revolution, and *Barbara Frietchie,* first put on in Philadelphia, October 10, 1899, was a tragedy of the Civil War, in which the atmosphere of Maryland during the war is well portrayed. His interest in a play representing a "period" is illustrated by *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* (1901), laid in New York City in the early seventies. Fitch succeeded quite well, too, in such a play as *Lovers' Lane* (1901), especially in his interpretation of a child's mind. In *The Girl and the Judge* (1901), laid in a Western town, he showed his ability in creating a situation, even if he did not develop it to the best advantage. The most important plays of Fitch are as follows: *Beau Brummell* (1890), *Betty's Finish* (1890), *Frédérick Lemaître* (1890), *A Modern Match* (1892), *Pamela's Prodigy* (1891), *The Masked Ball* from *Le Veglione* of Bisson and Carré (1892), *The Social Swim* (1893), *His Grace de Grammont* (1894), *April Weather* (1893), *Mistress Betty* (1895), (produced ten years later as *The Toast of the Town*), *Nathan Hale* (1898), *The Moth and the Flame* (1898) originally *The Harvest*, *The Cowboy and the Lady* (1899), *Barbara Frietchie* (1899), *The Climbers* (1901), *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* (1901), *Lovers' Lane* (1901), *The Last of the Dandies* (1901), *The Way of the World* (1901), *The Girl and the Judge* (1901), *The Stubbornness of Geraldine* (1902), *The Girl with the Green Eyes* (1902), *Her Own Way* (1903), *Glad of It* (1903), *Major André* (1903), *The Coronet of a Duchess* (1904), *The Woman in the Case* (1904), *Her Great Match* (1905), *The Truth* (1906), *The Straight Road* (1906), *A Happy Marriage* (1909), *The Bachelor* (1909), *The City* (1909). This list includes all his original plays except *The Girl Who Has Everything* (1906).

Her Great Match was written by Fitch while in Sicily and was produced first in Syracuse, New York, September 1, 1905, and then brought out at the Criterion

Theatre, New York, September 4, 1905. It was successful and the contemporary criticism praised the delightful effect of the love episodes and the realism of the scene on the morning after the party. It is significant that in this international contrast, Fitch has endowed his American characters with a proper sense of social values without laying stress upon the matter at all, and that "Jo Sheldon" meets the Prince upon the human footing of a man and a girl charmingly in love with one another.

The following plays have been published: *Nathan Hale* (R. H. Russell, 1899), (rep. by W. H. Baker), * *Barbara Frietchie* (Life Pub. Co., 1900), * *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* (Doubleday, Page and Co., 1902), * *The Climbers* (1906), * *The Girl with the Green Eyes* (1905), * *The Stubbornness of Geraldine* (1906), * *The Truth* (1907), * *Her Own Way* (1907), by Macmillan, * *Beau Brummell* (John Lane, 1908). Those starred can be obtained in the Samuel French reprints, and all of them, together with *Lovers' Lane, The Woman in the Case,* and *The City,* have been republished in the Memorial Edition, edited by M. J. Moses and Virginia Gerson (Little, Brown and Co., 1915).

Her Great Match has never before been published. The present text is printed from manuscript furnished the editor through the courtesy of Mrs. Alice M. Fitch, Miss Virginia Gerson and Messrs. Ernst and Cane, to all of whom the editor is indebted for information concerning Mr. Fitch.

For a bibliography of Clyde Fitch see *A Reading List of Clyde Fitch,* by John A. Lowe, *Bulletin of Bibliography,* Vol. 7, p. 30, July, 1912. For biography and criticism see Archie Bell, *The Clyde Fitch I Knew,* New York, 1909; L. C. Strang, *Players and Plays of the Last Quarter Century,* Boston, 1902, Vol. 2, Chap. 6; Montrose J. Moses, *The American Dramatist,* Chap. 10; B. H. Clark, *The British and American Drama of Today,* New York, 1915; and among many articles, Martin Bernbaum, *Clyde Fitch, an Appreciation, Independent,* Vol. 67, pp.123–131; W. P. Eaton, *The Dramatist as Man of Letters, Scribner's Magazine,* Vol. 46, pp. 490–97; Ada Patterson, *How a Rapid-Fire Dramatist Writes his Plays, Theatre,* Vol. 7, pp. 14–16, January, 1907—practically a statement by Fitch himself of his methods; *The American Stage Loses Clyde Fitch, Theatre,* Vol. 10, p. 112, October, 1909; Archie Bell, *The Real Clyde Fitch, Theatre,* Vol. 10, pp. 158–160, November, 1909. For a criticism of *Her Great Match,* see *The Theatre,* Vol. 5, p. 243, October, 1905.

Note to Third Edition.

In 1924 appeared *Clyde Fitch and His Letters* by Montrose J. Moses and Virginia Gerson in which the playwright reveals himself through his correspondence.

ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

Criterion Theatre, New York, September 4, 1905.

Jo Sheldon	Miss Maxine Elliott
Mrs. Sheldon	Miss Madge Girdlestone
Victoria Botes	Miss Nellie Thorne
H. R. H. The Grand Duchess of Hohenhetstein	Mme. Mathilde Cottrelly
Countess Casavetti	Miss Suzanne Perry
H. R. H. The Crown Prince Adolph of Eastphalia	Mr. Charles Cherry
Mr. Botes	Mr. Herbert Standing
Cyril Botes	Mr. Leon Quartermaine
Frank Wilton	Mr. Felix Edwardes
Hallen	Mr. Cory Thomas
Weeks	Mr. Hodgson Taylor

HER GREAT MATCH

ACT FIRST.

The scene is a tent at a garden fête for charity on the estate of MR. BOTES, *in Hertfordshire, England, on a Saturday in July.* WEEKS *and* HALLEN, *two young footmen in rather splendid liveries, are arranging the tent for the use of a fortune teller. A small table stands in the center with a chair on each side. The place is decorated with greens.*

WEEKS. Who is this yere Gypsy fortune teller *anyway?*

HALLEN. The American what 's staying here—Miss Sheldon. Ain't you 'eard 'em talking at table?

WEEKS. No, I ain't 'eard.

HALLEN. This is a queer family we 're in anyway, however you looks at it.

WEEKS. (*With emphasis.*) They pay wages!

HALLEN. Faugh! Why not? A millionaire brewer and a German to boot, ought to be bigger 'n they is.

WEEKS 'E ain't no *German!*

HALLEN. Well! you *beat* me! Anybody would think you was extra help in for the day. The Guv'nor was born in Eastphalia and left there when 'e was ten and came to London, and made 'is fortune 'ere! An' now 'e 's got the idea of being a Baron. Hold Botesy wants to be a *hancestor,* that 's what! See?

VICTORIA. (*Outside.*) And this is Jo's booth, Father—The Gypsy's tent.

(*She enters from the left followed by* BOTES *and* CYRIL, *who has a dog with him.*)

Finished, Hallen?

HALLEN. Quite, Miss.

BOTES. Well, this looks all right.

CYRIL. Don't it? I got it up from a picture of one I saw the Prince of Wales had at Marlborough House!

VICTORIA. (*Laughing.*) Then it 's sure to suit *you* and *father!*

BOTES. Do you think it 's rich enough, Cyril? Ought n't you have a little gold furniture? Remember we 're entertaining royalty for the first time, and we don't want to mince matters.

VICTORIA. Give them plenty of lager, father! That 's gold enough for you. And it 's a good chance to advertise the BOTES BRAND!

CYRIL. Sis! Don't be so funny!

VICTORIA. Father, if you ever get the title you are so mad about, I propose for our family crest—

BOTES. What?

CYRIL. (*Quickly.*) Don't ask her!

VICTORIA. A glass of lager, between two money bags rampant, with a crown of hope; and underneath for a motto, "There is no fly in our amber." It will sound better of course, in Latin!

BOTES. Well, you can make fun of me, Vic, but it is the serious ambition of my life, and I 'm going to get a title if there 's one for sale in Eastphalia!

CYRIL. That 's the spirit, Dad!

BOTES. For any price I can command.

CYRIL. Right ho, old Pops!

VICTORIA. It will take three generations to make your brand-new title worth bearing. It 'll smell of varnish all through Cyril's life.

BOTES. Nonsense! If I get a Barony from King George, I shall choose the name of my old home. *"Baron Arnsberg"!*—has n't that a fine old flavor?

VICTORIA. (*Sniffing.*) Not to me! I taste *rosin!*

CYRIL. But what I want to know is, why should it be all right socially, to *sell* bad champagne, and *all wrong to make good beer?*

VICTORIA. Father, you 'll never get any title to compare with your old one.

BOTES. "Word of honor Botes."

VICTORIA. Yes! "Word of honor Botes."

BOTES. Well, that came to me really from my father. Just as I want to give a Barony to Cyril. Father 's simple word in Arnsberg was as good as any document that was ever signed and sealed and witnessed. It was the catechism Father taught me! Never to break your

word when once it was given. (*Rising as he continues.*) Be *mighty careful how you gave it,* but once given no matter what it cost you, stand by it. No matter *what* your temptation don't break your word, break your neck rather.

VICTORIA. Hurrah for Grandfather!

CYRIL. Out of date now. If you 'd started your business on that principle nowadays, old chap, we 'd have to drink our own beer and *pay* for it.

BOTES. Speaking of paying for things—I wish Mrs. Sheldon 'd pay for her automobile. The Pushard people wrote me they must hold me responsible, as I introduced her, and she pays no attention to their bill. I suppose it 's all right?

VICTORIA. Of course. Jo told me she had a big fortune from her first husband.

CYRIL. I say, the Prince is awfully gone on Jo, ain't he? But he would n't marry her, would he?

VICTORIA. Why not?

BOTES. I suppose he 'd make her his morganatic wife.

CYRIL. Well, what 's the matter with that?

BOTES. Don't work well with Americans. There was a lot of trouble over Prince Jerome Bonaparte when he married a Baltimore lady that way.

CYRIL. Did he?

VICTORIA. It would never do for Jo! She does n't share your and Cyril's titled ambitions! She has high ideas and high ideals.

BOTES. I don't think one season on the Riviera goes quite to the bottom of any young lady's character. It seems to me Mrs. Sheldon knows her way about pretty well.

VICTORIA. Jo is a very different thing from her stepmother.

CYRIL. Rather!

BOTES. Well, all the same I think Miss Jo is—

JO. (*Outside.*) Hush! Don't say it! I am in hearing—unless it was something very nice. Of course if it was something very flattering, you can say it and I 'll wait outside. If it was something disagreeable then I 'll come right in and stop you.

BOTES. It was very disagreeable.

JO. I don't believe you!

(*She enters from the left in gypsy costume, with a pack of cards; they all exclaim in approval of her dress.*)

BOTES. Splendid! Splendid!

CYRIL. Bravo! Bravo!

VICTORIA. Lovely, Jo! Lovely!

JO. Do you really like it? (*They all exclaim again and try to see the back.*) No, no, you must n't look at the back. It is n't finished there,—Vic, go around to the back like a dear and see what 's the matter.

CYRIL. Vic is very near sighted.

JO. Oh, is she!!

BOTES. And very extravagant. She *never could make both ends meet,*—it takes her *father!*

JO. Oh, does it! how is it, Vic?

VICTORIA. It needs a pin, that 's all. Has anyone got a pin?

JO. Gentlemen, here 's your chance. Has either of you a pin?

(BOTES *and* CYRIL *both look around in mock eagerness.*)

CYRIL. Here 's a hammer and tacks!

JO. Won't do.

VICTORIA. Never mind, I 've got one.—There!

JO. It 's finished. *Thank you, gentlemen,* for your kind assistance.

HALLEN. (*Entering, to* BOTES.) A telegram for you, sir.

JO. (*Quickly, without thinking.*) Perhaps Prince Adolf is n't coming.

VICTORIA. (*Laughing.*) Dear me! How anxious we are!

CYRIL. Oh! Would n't it be awful!

(JO *throws the cards at* CYRIL.)

BOTES. Really, Miss Jo, I 'm apt to receive one or two telegrams in the course of a day. Listen! "I will give to myself the pleasure of to bring my aunt the Grand Duchess of Hohenhetstein and her suite at the Fête when you shall kindly arrange to receive."

VICTORIA. Oh, heavens!

BOTES. "My regards to your daughter. Adolf."

JO. Oh, you are a wretch. Wait till I tell your fortune today. Then I 'll punish you.

BOTES. (*Going out toward the left.*) Come along, Cyril, we must make arrangements to receive the Grand Duchess. Vic, you 'll be on hand."

VICTORIA. Oh, mercy—I suppose so.

CYRIL. What I want to know is—has n't she come to look Miss Jo over?

JO. Look here—I 'm what they call at home an athletic girl; and if you keep on like this I 'll forget myself and *go for you!*

CYRIL. I wish you would. If you 'd

grapple me once you could hang on as long as you'd want. I'd like it.

VICTORIA. Where'll you sit?

JO. Here. —and he there.

VICTORIA. He?

JO. (*Embarrassed.*) I mean he or she or they, whoever is having their hand told.

VICTORIA. (*Laughing.*) Oh, Jo—can you read hands at all?

JO. No—not really! I just guess at it. I make them look me straight in the eyes—

VICTORIA. Oh, well! then of course they give up *everything!*

JO. And then I sort of feel my way and I can tell when I'm right.

VICTORIA. Well, I've got a perfect plan! I shall be outside the tent there, and can easily see those coming from the other way. Cyril is to take his time giving them their tickets, while I come in and give you points quickly and when I ring the bell, I rush out, and Cyril lets the victim in! (*She waits for an answer, but Jo is preoccupied and looking into space.*) Don't you think that's a fine plan? (*Then receiving no answer.*) Jo! (*She turns Jo around.*) You haven't heard a word.

JO. Yes I have, really. You're going to come in and tell me things, I know. Vic! Tell me something new!

VICTORIA. What?

JO. Of course you're all only teasing me about Prince Adolf. You don't really think I care for him. Do you?

VICTORIA. O no! not at all, Jo! Not at all!

JO. Well! Anyway, you don't think he thinks I care for him—do you?

VICTORIA. (*Seriously.*) I don't know a woman in London who'd have held her own with him as you have.

JO. I've never thrown myself at any man's head, not at any rate until he'd thrown himself at my feet.

VICTORIA. Hasn't Prince Adolf?

JO. Not at my feet yet,—he may be about my knees—but not in earnest. I'm sure he doesn't care a rap about me.

VICTORIA. My dear, I'll bet you a five pound note for the Eastphalian sufferers, that he talks, eats, drinks and sleeps, laughs, sings, nothing but you!

JO. (*Embracing her.*) Vic Botes, you're the dearest girl that ever lived.

VICTORIA. Oh, am I?

JO. Yes, and if it wasn't for you I think I'd take the very first boat back to America! I'm homesick.

VICTORIA. I shouldn't call it "Home"-sick!

JO. Vic, I don't ask this for any personal reasons, you know that, it's just my curiosity's aroused;—did a Crown Prince of any nation ever marry an American girl?

VICTORIA. Of course I understand that your question is purely impersonal! but I can't say that I ever did hear of a case. In fact, my dear, I don't think an heir to a throne could marry anyone not of royal blood, except in one way.

JO. What way?

VICTORIA. Morganatically.

JO. Morganatically! You mean one wife and then marry someone also for Queen?

VICTORIA. Yes.

JO. Well! The only American girl that sort of a Crown Prince could get would come from Utah. You can take your little Jo's word for that.

VICTORIA. Of course a Prince can give up his throne. An Austrian Grand Duke became plain Monsieur Somebody or other three or four years ago to marry a Swiss girl, and they say they're the happiest couple in the world.

JO. It would be an awfully big sacrifice for a man, wouldn't it, to give up a throne?

VICTORIA. Not if he loved you.

JO. No, I'd give up fifty! I'd be glad of the chance to have something big to do to show how much I loved. Have you ever been in love, Vic?

VICTORIA. No, men bore me.

JO. Bore you?

VICTORIA. Yes! I think they're the most selfish, egotistical creatures.

JO. Oh, come, Vic!

VICTORIA. Want everything for themselves—

JO. Wait a minute, my dear—has one wanted you yet?

VICTORIA. No, thank heaven.

JO. Oh well, just wait till one does, and then you'll thank heaven the other way around.

VICTORIA. How do you know? unless you're in love yourself.

JO. Oh, I just imagine.

(MRS. SHELDON *enters, speaking as she does so, with a letter in her hand.*)

MRS. S. Anything private, or may I come in?

VICTORIA and JO. (*Together.*) No, no—come in.

MRS. S. They're in great excitement at the house getting ready to receive the Grand Duchess with Prince Adolf,—and I've just had a dear letter from your father, Jo.

VICTORIA. I suppose I ought to see if I can help.

JO. When am I to see the rest of the Fête?

VICTORIA. I'll come back for you or send Cyril. (*Exit.*)

MRS. S. Your father isn't very well, Jo.

JO. Oh, Mother Lena!

MRS. S. Not seriously ill, but I confess I'm a little worried. He writes "I'll be all right I know in a day or two; I expect the next English mail if it brings letters from you both will finish my cure. Especially if it tells me you are both coming home. Isn't it most time? You've been gone *five months, three weeks, two days, and eighteen hours!* Give my very best love to my girl, Jo; I know someone'll be taking her from me before long, but you are mine for life, Lena, and I'll never let you go away again without me, law office or no law office."

MRS. S. I can tell his girl Jo one thing, a woman is very lucky to have the devoted love of a man like your father.

JO. And his girl Jo can tell you, her dear father is lucky to have a woman like you, Mother Lena, to make him so happy. Bless you for it.

MRS. S. Bless *you!* Jo dear, of course you know what everyone here is talking about?

JO. No! What?

MRS. S. Prince Adolf!

JO. (*Roguishly.*) What about Prince Adolf?

MRS. S. Miss Josephine Sheldon! I was not born yesterday, and I ought to know what I'm talking about when I say this young foreigner is head over heels in love with you!

JO. Mother Lena, he's only amusing himself, he's not in earnest—any more than *I* am.

MRS. S. You're *not* in earnest?

JO. (*Hesitating.*) I don't know.

MRS. S. Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be—

JO. Perhaps—but Mother Lena—he couldn't marry me! He must marry some Princess.

MRS. S. If he loves you he will find a way. It would be a great match, Jo.

JO. That means nothing to me. I will only marry for one thing—Love! and I could never *love* a man whom I didn't honor down to the ground.

MRS. S. You mustn't ask too much. Men are human.

JO. So am I. I don't ask for an angel, I wouldn't want one to live with—not in this world. But the man I love must want *me,* and only me, above everything and everybody else, as I shall want him. He must make me believe he would never lie to me as I would never lie to him. He must make me feel that the sea or the desert would be home if he were there with me; that there is no such thing as loneliness for him or me in life with our love between us, and no comradeship for either of us in the world without each other. That's what love means to me, Mother Lena.

MRS. S. (*Meaningly.*) *When did you think out all this?*

JO. (*Smiling and turning away embarrassed.*) *Lately!*

MRS. S. Jo!

JO. I know it's a pretty big order!

MRS. S. Bend your head down! Here is a present for you, to bring you good luck today.

JO. (*As she does so.*) But you mustn't give me so many presents, and such handsome ones. It reminds me—I opened a bill that came for you today by mistake.

MRS. S. A bill?

JO. From Streeter, the Bond Street Jeweller. It looked like "Miss Sheldon" on the envelope. Mother Lena, it's for 3500 pounds—over $17,000. And they say this is their last pressure for payment.

MRS. S. It's an old, old bill we've had some discussion about.

JO. It said for articles bought since April 8th, this year.

MRS. S. (*A little coldly.*) You read it through very carefully.

JO. Naturally—I thought it for me.

MRS. S. Well, I have my own reasons for not paying at present.

JO. But it doesn't somehow seem to me quite right—not square.

MRS. S. Jo!

JO. I'm sorry, but you know I always say

just what I feel. Does Father know about it?

MRS. S. No—and must n't. Remember, he 's ill.

JO. Mother Lena, you 've not been speculating?

MRS. S. No, no! I tell you I have my own reasons for not paying Streeter's bill.

HALLEN. (*Entering.*) Mrs. Sheldon?

MRS. S. A gentleman to see me?

HALLEN. Yes, madam, Hi brought him 'ere.

MRS. S. Drop those curtains please, and show him in here.

HALLEN. Yes, madam.

MRS. S. It 's a man I want to see on business—a lawyer from home.

JO. Vic is probably ready to show me around by now.

MRS. S. Now don't worry about that bill.

JO. But it 's such an awful sum!

MRS. S. When I tell you to trust me it 's all right.

JO. But why run up a bill for so valuable a pearl necklace or for such a tiara, if you can't pay, and where are they?

MRS. S. When I tell you it 's all right?

JO. Forgive me—yes, I know I must be wrong.

MRS. S. There, that 's sensible. And now I want you to do me a little favor, a little joke I want to play on Mr. Botes.

JO. What?

MRS. S. You know how eager he is for a title?

JO. I think everyone knows that!

MRS. S. I want you to tell his hand and find a big honor for him in the near future,—

JO. I see! The title he 's so crazy about.

MRS. S. Of course. You know he hopes to get a barony out of old King George of Eastphalia.

JO. I 'll find a coronet glued on to his life line! How old is he?

MRS. S. About *sixty* something.

JO. Then I 'll find it right about the middle. The lines make a fool's cap rather, but it 'll do for Mr. Botes' crown. Thank you for the chain—it 's a beauty—but you ought n't—

MRS. S. Jo!

JO. Ought n't to spoil me as you do! Goodbye.

(*Enter* HALLEN, *followed by* WILTON.)

(*Exit* JO.)

HALLEN. Mr. Wilton.

MRS. S. Those other curtains.

(*The whole attitude and expression of* MRS. SHELDON *when she is alone, changes. Her face grows hard and worried and her body sinks into an attitude of dejection. She pulls herself together, however, as* HALLEN *shows in* WILTON.)

MRS. S. (*Turning pleasantly.*) How do you do?

WILTON. How do you do, Mrs. Sheldon?

MRS. S. You know of course, that your business is strictly private—and that I don't wish anyone here to know any details of your errand?

WILTON. Oh yes. Mr. Prenter made me quite understand that.

MRS. S. Mr. Prenter is well?

WILTON. Not altogether—he is too much worried.

MRS. S. I am sorry; I sincerely hope, for my own sake, that the bank's affairs are in good condition.

WILTON. Mrs. Sheldon, I am Mr. Prenter's lawyer, and I 've been sent over here to come straight to the point. There can be absolutely no more delay or evasion. Unless you can send me back by Tuesday's steamer from Liverpool with two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the Central National Bank, Mr. Prenter will be an utterly ruined man, the Examiner will take charge of the bank, and *you will be indicted.*

MRS. S. But I am over here! You would have to procure extradition papers.

WILTON. That would be easy. Meanwhile you would have the disgrace of exposure all the same, for yourself and for your husband.

MRS. S. Mr. Sheldon knows nothing whatever about my business.

WILTON. He would have to prove it. We have his signature on some of your papers.

MRS. S. I got those from him by deception. He thought he was witnessing mortgages.

WILTON. Well, that 's not *our* business.

MRS. S. Why does n't Mr. Prenter help himself? After all he 's more criminally responsible than I. He 's President of the bank and has made me these loans illegally without the knowledge of the other directors. To save himself he ought—

WILTON. He can't! All he can raise is one hundred thousand dollars—which is

not enough to carry on the business of the bank. He 's a desperate, repentant man, Mrs. Sheldon, and he 's made up his mind. To prevent ruin all around the directors must be told and you and he suffer, unless you can furnish two hundred and fifty thousand more—

MRS. S. I came over here in the hopes of raising the money, and if I have n't sent it, it 's because I 've failed. I 've worked like a slave over here. I 've bought jewels I could n't pay for, and given them as security in one direction, I 've borrowed twice what sums I could on the strength of my letters of introduction, and on the social success of my step-daughter. And do you know how much I have managed to scrape together? Twelve thousand pounds! Sixty thousand dollars! not a cent more!

WILTON. It 's worse than ruin to you, Mrs. Sheldon.—It means prison.

MRS. S. Don't! Don't! You go too far when you say that to me. I acted in good faith with Mr. Prenter.

WILTON. Bah! I don't believe in you, Mrs. Sheldon. I believe these securities you boast of are fakes. Why not be frank with me?

MRS. S. (*Rising, almost in tears.*) How dare you? (*Then controlling herself.*) Mr. Prenter controlled the bank funds! I did n't! He was willing to accept the usurious interest I promised! Save your threats for your client, not me, Mr. Wilton—and cable him today that he shall have the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

WILTON. You said as much before.

MRS. S. And I say it again. When must you sail back with the money?

WILTON. Tuesday noon.

MRS. S. I will have definite news for you by Monday; we return to town after tomorrow.

WILTON. Will your definite news be in a cash form?

MRS. S. More than likely.

WILTON. It will be somewhat necessary, as I hope I have made myself clear.

MRS. S. I don't want to hear what Mr. Prenter begged. Cable him—"Everything all right." He must n't make a fool of himself and tell the directors anything. Thank you for coming over. Can you find your way back? There 's a servant who will show you. (*Calling.*) Weeks! Weeks! Mr. Prenter will do nothing till he hears from you, you 're sure?

WILTON. Yes.

(WEEKS *appears in the doorway.*)

MRS. S. Weeks, show this gentleman the way back. And, Weeks?

WEEK. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. S. Ask Mr. Botes to be so kind as to join me here.

WEEKS. Here comes Mr. Botes, Madam. (*Exit.*)

MRS. S. (*In a conventionally agreeable manner to* WILTON.) Good-bye, Mr. Wilton. Delighted to have seen you—

WILTON. Thank you. (*Exit.*)

MRS. S. He might want some sort of a guarantee from Jo! To be sure we were in earnest and meant business. I wonder if he knows her handwriting?

BOTES. (*Outside.*) Is Mrs. Sheldon here?

WEEKS. Yes, sir—she was just asking for you.

(BOTES *enters from the left.*)

BOTES. Mrs. Sheldon, won't you help receive her Royal Highness?

MRS. S. Delighted! But first, Mr. Botes, can you give me just five minutes?

BOTES. Certainly; I 've a special to bring them down and I 'm sending a four-horsed Victoria with postilions to the station.

MRS. S. (*Rising.*) Splendid! Mr. Botes? (*She holds out her hand.*)

BOTES. (*Taking it.*) Mrs. Sheldon!

MRS. S. We 're good friends, I hope?

BOTES. So do I.

MRS. S. Good. (*With a final grasp of his hand, she drops it.*) You 're a man about forty-five.

BOTES. Thank you.

MRS. S. And I 'm forty.

BOTES. No! No! Not yet.

MRS. S. You 're too kind. What I mean is we 're two sensible people and I 'm coming right straight to the point. You don't make any secret of wanting a title—a barony for your family.

BOTES For my son; the rest of my family sticks up her nose at it.

MRS. S. (*Pleasantly.*) Suppose I could arrange your securing this title?

BOTES. I did n't know you had them in the States, except "Colonel" and "Judge."

MRS. S. No, I 'm serious. I want forty thousand pounds. Would you give it for a title such as you wish?

BOTES. Well, Mrs. Sheldon, you rather take my breath away.

MRS. S. What 's forty thousand pounds to a man with millions if he can satisfy his ambition, and that of his son?

BOTES. It 's not the money that staggers me. What title? How is it possible? It must be some practical joke of yours and Vic's.

MRS. S. What a practical joke! (*Sitting down at the table.*) May I trust you? (*He nods.*) Jo is going to marry the Crown Prince of Eastphalia.

BOTES. It is settled?

MRS. S. Practically.

BOTES. Good!

MRS. S. Jo will give—a—all that passes between us of course is buried?

BOTES. I give you my word of honor.

MRS. S. Jo will give you a guarantee of a barony among the titles given in celebration of her wedding to the Crown Prince if you will give me the sum I ask for.

BOTES. You are speaking for her as well as for yourself?

MRS. S. Yes. You let her tell your hand this afternoon. But I need hardly ask you not to discuss the matter with her. If we go on into this I am to be the middle man—that Jo insists on.

BOTES. Well, I can't say as I blame her. It means a sort of shaky business for a young lady to go in for. It is n't my daughter's idea of Miss Jo at all! I 'm sure if I were to tell Vic she 'd refuse to believe it.

MRS. S. But you 'll not tell your daughter.

BOTES. No, I 've given you my word, and that 's my weak point, you know, not to go back on my word.

MRS. S. (*Smiling.*) I should call it a strong point.

BOTES. The marriage would have to be morganatic?

MRS. S. That would n't limit your influence with Prince Adolf;—he loves her!

BOTES. Oh, I don't object if Jo does n't.

MRS. S. If I give you a paper signed by Jo agreeing to use every influence in her power to have you granted this barony; to make it a positive request of her husband and her first one.

BOTES. (*Taking out his pocket book—doubtfully.*) Of course that would n't be really any guarantee.

MRS. S. Perhaps not legally, but morally. And after all what 's forty thousand pounds to a multi-millionaire to risk?

BOTES. Oh, come, I would n't be one if I took that tack.

MRS. S. (*Leaving her hand on his arm.*) I know how you love your son—think what it will mean to Cyril.

BOTES. (*Rising.*) But it seems so unlike your daughter.

MRS. S. Jo has a right to be ambitious as well as you and Cyril.

BOTES. That 's true.

MRS. S. And I 've got to have this money—or a marriage of any kind won't be possible.

BOTES. (*Approaching her.*) Well, look here, if you 'll bring me this signed by Miss Jo,—I 'll risk it.

MRS. S. (*Reading.*) "I give Augustus Botes, Esq., my word of honor I am going to marry the Crown Prince Adolf, and agree to use all my influence to have a barony conferred on him, if not amongst the honors given at my wedding, then on my husband's coming to the throne. This to be in—" In?

BOTES. Exchange—

MRS. S. —"Exchange for £40,000, given to my step-mother the day this paper is received. The receipt of which this acknowledges—signed—" (*Turning to him and holding out her hand.*) Thank you.

BOTES. (*Looking away and not taking it.*) There are no thanks due, it 's just business.

(VICTORIA *enters from the left.*)

VICTORIA. Father! Heaps of people have arrived already in motors. Also the caravan is ready to go to the station to meet your grandees.

MRS. S. (*Quickly.*) Oh, then, I must go to my place. Hullo, Jo.

(*Exit* MRS. SHELDON *as* JO *enters from the left.*)

JO. Hullo, Lena. People are beginning to come, and I 'm getting stage fright.

VICTORIA. Nonsense.

(*Enter* CYRIL *with a board.*)

CYRIL. They 're off to the station. Great day for us! I should think it would end our snubbing in this neighborhood.

JO. Come along, Mr. Botes—(*she comes around to the right of the table and takes* BOTES' *hand. She then goes to*

the chair at the left of the table)—give me your hand, I 'm going to start on you —and get into practice.

CYRIL. (*Showing the board.*) How 's this for a sandwich board?

(*They all look at it and laugh.*)

BOTES. Hiawatha.

CYRIL. The American Gypsy.

JO. From Milwaukee. You 'd better study your American geography.

BOTES. Have I time, Cyril?

CYRIL. Yes, old boy—give us a guinea.

BOTES. I say, you don't want me to pay. I 'm getting up this blooming fête. And think what it 's costing me.

JO. Oh, but—Mr. Botes!

CYRIL. Oh but come on, old grand stand!

VICTORIA. Cyril 'll get it!

CYRIL. Right y' are! (BOTES *gives him a shilling.*) A shilling! Make it short, Jo.

(BOTES *sits by the table*—CYRIL *puts the money in the box.*)

(JO, *with a smile and a wink to* VICTORIA, *makes ready.* BOTES *gives her his hand, watching her searchingly all the time.*)

CYRIL. (*Looking at his watch.*) Father can have a two minutes' future, that 's all.

JO. Well—first—you have a generous heart.

VICTORIA. (*Doubtfully.*) A what?

BOTES. Well!!!

JO. And two children.

CYRIL. (*Laughing.*) Is n't it wonderful, this palmistry?

JO. A good daughter—and a bad son.

VICTORIA. Quite right.

CYRIL. Bah! You 're a fakir! One minute 's up.

BOTES But all that 's my past.

JO. Very well, I 'll begin in the middle of your hand—I see a coronet.

CYRIL. Really! or are you just making it up?

JO. Can't you see it there?

CYRIL. Where?

JO. A Baron's coronet?

BOTES. (*Looking hard at* JO.) Wonderful, is n't it?

CYRIL. Time 's up, Father! (*Exit.*)

JO. (*Who is all through, intensely amused.*) A coronet for a guinea! You can't complain at the price.

BOTES. (*Rises—meaningly, looking at her closely.*) I don't mind the price if I am sure of getting it.

WEEKS. (*At the door, hurriedly, excited.*) Beg pardon, they 're passing the lodge, sir.

BOTES. Good Lord! Where 's my hat?

JO. Lena put me up to teasing your father, but I don't think I succeeded very well, do you?

VICTORIA. Poor Father! He is like the little boy in the advertisements—He won't be happy till he gets it. What sort of a man is your father? I 've often wondered.

JO. (*Sitting on the ground.*) Oh, such a dear old darling, Vic. We were n't separated a day of our lives until he married Mother Lena. He says he would n't have married even then, but he expected me to run off and leave him any day. Only I haven't gone off as quickly as he expected. And his marriage has made a tiny little break—not between him and me,—only in our lives because, try as hard as I can, I can't really love Mrs. Sheldon.

CYRIL. Pst! Pst! Countess Casavetti.

VICTORIA. Who?

CYRIL. (*Whispers strongly and disappears.*) Casavetti.

JO. Oh, quickly—tell me something about her.

VICTORIA. She is an American who married a cheap Italian in a boarding house in Florence. She 's a beastly little woman—crazy about married men. Takes everybody's husband away. They call her the Housebreaker.

JO. Where 's her own husband?

VICTORIA. Oh, my dear! Lost a long time ago in the shuffle.

JO. But I don't see that this helps me very much.

VICTORIA. Oh, you don't do yourself justice.

JO. What 's her latest?

VICTORIA. Tall!

JO. Dark or light?

VICTORIA. Dark.

CYRIL. This way.

COUNTESS. (*Giggling as she enters.*) I 'm quite frightened.

JO. You need n't be.

COUNTESS. Of course you 're not *really* a gypsy!

JO. No, not really.

COUNTESS. (*Sitting by the table.*) I have n't the slightest idea who you are. I hope you don't know me.

(*Giving her left hand.*)

JO. I 'm sorry to say I never had the pleasure of seeing you before in my life.

COUNTESS. (*Surprised.*) But I 'm an extremely well-known woman in London and having my portrait in the book of beauty—unfortunately gave me added notoriety.

Jo. (*Looking at her left hand.*) Too bad! I see you have a great deal of temperament.

COUNTESS. Oh, where do you see that?

Jo. I must n't give my trade away—but I see you are a very ardent woman.

COUNTESS. It 's perfectly wonderful! You know I am. I adore men!

Jo. Well, I don't mind them myself.

COUNTESS. Do you love *everyone?*

Jo. No, I won't go so far as that—But I think you 're what Cyril would call—a flyer.

COUNTESS. I rather like Cyril! The trouble is he 's not married and there 's no excitement.

Jo. Oh, but he 's young yet, he 'll keep, and he 's sure to marry in time. You must have your reserves.

COUNTESS. That 's true! How clever you are.

(*The "Watch on the Rhine" is played by the band in the distance.* Jo *and the* COUNTESS *lift their heads and listen.*)

COUNTESS The Royalties have arrived. Do go on!

Jo. No— Yes, yes, it is there!

COUNTESS. What!!

Jo. Do you want me to tell you everything I see?

COUNTESS. Oh, yes, please—everything.

(VIC *enters.*)

Jo. I see a married man coming across your future.

COUNTESS. (*Excited.*) Oh, is he coming soon?

Jo. Very soon.

COUNTESS. (*Laughing with nervous delight.*) What 's he like?

Jo. Tall!

COUNTESS. Oh, it 's perfectly wonderful! And is he dark?

Jo. Yes, dark.

COUNTESS. Yes, that 's right.

Jo. Of course it 's right; the hand never lies.

COUNTESS. I think it 's perfectly amazing! I 've always scoffed at this sort of thing, you know! excuse me, but—are you a lady, or are you paid for this?

Jo. I 'm doing this for my friend—I am Miss Sheldon, an American.

COUNTESS. (*Quickly.*) Don't tell me you are *the* Miss Sheldon, the beauty who was on the Riviera this winter?

Jo. No, I won't tell you that, but only that I am Miss Jo Sheldon.

COUNTESS. The one the Crown Prince of Eastphalia is mad about?

Jo. *There* I can assure you you are very wrong.

COUNTESS. Not at all! But I should never have known you from your photographs. They do flatter, don't they?

Jo. Well, really!

COUNTESS. Oh, you know what I mean! I want to be taken by the same man—you must give me his name and address.

(*Re-enter* CYRIL.)

CYRIL. You 've had your guinea's worth, Countess Casavetti.

COUNTESS. (*Taking her parasol—rising and going back of table to opening.*) Oh dear, do come to see me in London, I am sure we would get on immensely, and I should adore having you tell my hand every day.

CYRIL. Come, come, or it will be half a crown extra.

COUNTESS. Do lunch next Tuesday, I 've a short blond one coming then. His wife has died since I took him up, and he rather bores me. (*Going.*) I 'd love to have you take him off my hands! That 's a dear! O, your Royal Highness, how lucky I am, are n't I? Do walk a step with me and let me tell you all about the wonderful gypsy.

Jo. Well!!! She is a pig! She 's actually trying to walk off with my Prince!

CYRIL. Your Prince?

Jo. Well, you know what I mean.

CYRIL. You bet I do!

Jo. He is n't a married man. He 's none of her business.

VICTORIA. (*In the doorway, whispering.*) Pst! Cyril! Cyril!

Jo. Cyril!

CYRIL. Prince? (CYRIL *rushes out.*)

VICTORIA. Prince Adolf!

Jo. (*Jumps up with a little scream of joy.*) Oh, hurrah!—she did n't keep him long. I 'll reward him for that—if I can!

VICTORIA. He only arrived here two minutes ago! It did n't take him long to get here, did it?

Jo. Not very.

VICTORIA. (*Insinuatingly.*) I wonder if

he knows by any chance who the gypsy is?

Jo. (*Mischievously.*) I wonder! and by the way you need n't wait, Vic—I think I know all about him I need to.

Victoria. I thought I 'd just—

Jo. Well, you need n't think, my darling. You can go away instead!

Victoria. No, I want to suggest that you find a blonde woman "crossing his path."

Jo. You little beast!—I won't do anything of the sort!—O, but yes I will! It will be great fun! Now ring your little bell and run away.

Victoria. What 's your hurry?

Jo. I 'm not in a hurry, only—(*pushing her up to entrance*)—please go away—he might n't wait.

Victoria. Not wait! He 'd wait till Doomsday! (*Exit.*)

(Jo *quickly moves the chair so they are on the left and right of the table.*)

(*Enter* Prince Adolf. *He comes down to the table.*)

Prince. Oh!

Jo. (*Curtseying.*) Guten Tag, your Royal Highness.

Prince. (*Speaking in German.*) If you can speak German, then I will not talk any more to you in English—

Jo. No! No! I can't really speak at all, only the tiniest German! And you speak English splendidly!

Prince. (*Putting hat on table, he motions her to sit down.*) Ach! Yah! I spik what is you call der pidgin English! So! I have now come to you for my future. Do you know that I was much happy to ask mine future of your hands?

Jo. O, no, of yours. Come, put your hand on the table, and let me read it!

Prince. (*Disappointed.*) On der table?

Jo. O dear! What 's the matter?—

Prince. They haf said you shall haf to hold mine hand inside your hand to tell me of it.

Jo. How much did you pay to come in the tent?

Prince. One guinea.

Jo. O, that is only for the table telling. It 's two guineas for the charity, if I tell it more—more *sociably.*

Prince. What is der charity?

Jo. Really a title for Mr. Botes.

Prince. *What?*

Jo. O, no. I did n't mean that. Please forget I said it. But surely you know, it 's for the flood sufferers in Eastphalia?

Prince. So? O, yes, I have forgot. Goot! dere is de guinea. And now begin. (*Lifting his left hand and holding it out.*) Nein! Nein! dat was not comfortable—(*he takes her left hand in his right hand, and puts his left hand over her right hand*)—and I was frightened for fear you shall drop it—please! watch out! hold it so! So! Dat is better!

Jo. Excuse me, who 's telling this fortune, you or I?

Prince. Ach! Gott! You!

(*Looks lovingly at her, and squeezes her hand.*)

Jo. (*Laughing.*) Oh! but you must n't do that!

Prince. What I do?

Jo. Squeeze my hand—you know perfectly well. And if you do it again I 'll give your money back and not tell you a thing! (*Pushing the coin.*)

Prince. I beg pardons.

(*Puts out his left hand and pushes the coin back.*)

Jo. (*With mock severity.*) That 's better. You must remember that you are to let your hand lie perfectly quiet or else the important lines won't show. Whatever pressing is to be done, *I* must do it.

Prince. Will you? (*Eagerly.*)

Jo. (*Holding his left hand.*) If it 's necessary to tell the lines.

Prince. I shall like dat immense—go on. (*Gazing into her eyes lovingly.*)

Jo. You must n't look at me like that, either.

Prince. Why not?

Jo. It—it—sort of prejudices me and keeps me from seeing straight.

Prince. (*Turning away and leaving hand with* Jo.) Well, I shall do me mein best and look out away. Only now make a beginning.

Jo. Well!! You have a lovely disposition.

Prince. Dat was not true, you shall be one bad hand reader.

Jo. Wait a minute—that is the hand of what you *might* be. Give me your other hand.

Prince. You shall take bose when you like.

(*Turns to her, giving both.*)

Jo. No, thank you—(*putting the left away, keeping the right*)—I think one of your hands, your Royal Highness, is all

I can manage at a time. Now in this hand is the line as you've made it yourself, and it says you have spoiled your disposition.

PRINCE. Well, dat vas not true either.

JO. Thank you! I seem to have made a *good* beginning!!!

PRINCE. You haf not begin yet! It shall take you one hour to begin, and one more hour also to make finish.

(*He kisses her hand; then takes her hand in both of his, and kisses it.*)

JO. (*Taking her hand away.*) Prince Adolf! If you do anything like that again I will begin *and* finish, at the same time, *and at once.*

(*Pushes coin toward him.*)

PRINCE. Forgeef me!

(*Pushes coin back.*)

JO. I will—partially.

PRINCE. Thanks.

JO. (*Going on with the right hand.*) You are capable of loving very deeply.

PRINCE. Ah, dat was *right!!*

JO. But I can't make out if it is loving *someone else, or yourself.*

PRINCE. So! Well, you shall skip dat, I know mineself dat answer.

(*He leans over table. She looks up at him, smiling; he smiles meaningly back at her—she turns her glance away—and then back to his hand.*)

JO. You are very brave.

PRINCE. That vas nefer mein fault. Dere vas nefer one Hohenhetstein a coward!

JO. (*Looking at him.*) You will make a splendid, kind, sensible, republican king! —just like a President!

PRINCE. Is dat in mein hand?

JO. Yes, and I know it's in your heart too.

PRINCE. I cannot guarantee dat! mein heart is so full of something else just now.

JO. (*Softly.*) *You* are going to be loved very, very deeply.

PRINCE. (*Softly, but excited—eager.*) Yes?

JO. Yes! (*She looks up at him a second and then adds.*) By your subjects!

PRINCE. (*Angry.*) Ach! Is dat all?

JO. No—

PRINCE. (*Softly again.*) No?

JO. (*Softly.*) No!

PRINCE. There was someone else?

JO. Yes.

PRINCE. Yes?

(*A pause.* JO *looking at his hand, he at her. He places his free hand on hers. She lifts it off and looking up at him, points back to his hand.*)

JO. Yes, look. Your fate line is crossed right here—by a *blonde woman.*

PRINCE. By a vat!!!

JO. By a *blonde woman.*

PRINCE. Neffer! (*Takes his hand away.*)

JO. Yes, it's *there in your hand!*

PRINCE. Damn it! Where!

JO. Really!!!

PRINCE. O, I beg your pardons! I beg your pardons! but look once more—you shall be mistaken, where was der blonde lady?

JO. There! Don't you see—a lovely little canary blonde!

PRINCE. Nein! I hate canaries! and I see only one tall, beautiful, black-haired. blue-eyed Juno!

JO. O well, that's because you don't understand how to read a hand.

PRINCE. No, just look one other time and see when you can't see with mein eyes! I see her *dark!*

JO. But that's the best I do: it's impossible to go back upon your fate line. See! there she is, a little *blonde.*

(*Pointing it out in right hand.*)

PRINCE. No, I was not willing to see her —she was a lie!

JO. No, she's true. She crosses your fate line, just like Forty-second Street.

PRINCE. Vat vas dat? Forty-second Street?

JO. O, it's the—the equator of New York; it crosses every important street in the city and lands you in the water at both sides. I'm afraid she's a strenuous lady, your blonde, and that you've got the water ahead of you.

PRINCE. (*Looking disgustedly at his hand.*) It was all your joking. It has all not nothing of truth at it. I tell you what we do. Try now the other hand once.

(*The* PRINCE *holds out his left hand.*)

JO. It would n't do any good. That hand's only what you might have been.

PRINCE. Perhaps it was not too late yet for me to be what I might have been.

JO. Perhaps *not!*

(*Enter* CYRIL *and* VIC.)

CYRIL. I'm sorry, sir, but time's up. And there's a line out here waiting a dozen deep.

PRINCE. But I vas not satisfied at mein future.

CYRIL. Try another!

PRINCE. (*Rises, to* CYRIL.) Yes, she haf told der wrong hand. Here is another guinea.

(JO *sees* VIC, *and motions her quickly to go back—she exits.*)

PRINCE. Here vas two—I will haf der *two guinea* kind.

CYRIL. What's the *two guinea kind?*

JO. Never mind, *I'll see he gets it. Good-bye, Cyril!*

CYRIL. Good what?

JO. Good-bye.

PRINCE. Good-bye.

CYRIL. Ah! Don't worry!—Good-bye!

(CYRIL *bows and exits.*)

PRINCE. (*Sitting and giving the right hand.*) Now! Try bose, and please be good.

JO. (*Mischievously.*) You've sort of discouraged me, but I will try once more.

PRINCE. Do you not see some new lines dis time?

JO. Yes, here your life line breaks and one side goes off at right angles! Can that mean going away from your throne?

PRINCE. How?

JO. Perhaps a revolution in Eastphalia!

PRINCE. (*Laughing.*) O, neffer! Ve vas the smallest and der happiest Kingdom in all Germany.

JO. It could n't mean that you are going to give up the throne!

PRINCE. O neffer! dat vas also as impossible!

JO. Impossible!

PRINCE. Why should I mein throne give up? Let us skip Pollittiks and go on to the heart line.

JO. You're quite right. Why should you give up your throne? By all means let us skip pollittiks. Well, *this* hand says you love much—

PRINCE. Yah!

JO. (*Continues.*) And *often!*

PRINCE. *Nein!*

JO. And you are loved back *often*—

PRINCE. Nein, nein!

JO. But not much.

PRINCE. (*Angry.*) What beastly hands I do have for mineself.

JO. Until—

(*She looks up dramatically, but smiling.*)

PRINCE. Until?

JO. Yes, you see—until that *blonde* woman crosses fate line!

PRINCE. (*Rises.*) Nein, nein.

JO. I'm very sorry, I can't help it! maybe she's a German *Princess.* She evidently is your fate.

PRINCE. Miss Sheldon!!!

JO. (*Rising.*) Sir?

PRINCE. Miss Sheldon, I tink you vas one great big flirt!

JO. Your Royal Highness, I tink you was one little other! (*Curtseys.*)

PRINCE. (*Angry—bows.*) Good-bye—

(*Turns and goes to door.*)

JO. Good-bye. You're not really going?

PRINCE. Not really!

JO. Come back—come back. I'll tell it all over again.

PRINCE. You will!

JO. No! for nothing this time—we'll see if I can't change the color of that lady's hair.

ACT SECOND.

The scene is the conservatory at MR. BOTES' *house in London on the following Monday night. The room is semi-circular with a green lattice work covered with ivy running around it. Extending from the right toward the center is a white marble carved bench. Behind it a tier of pink rhododendron bushes is in full bloom. On the left, toward the rear, is a door leading to the garden. Also on the left, but farther forward are the doors which lead into the drawing room.*

MRS. SHELDON *is sitting on the marble bench.* HALLEN *and* WEEKS *enter from the garden, carrying a string of Japanes lanterns.*

MRS. S. (*To* HALLEN.) Have you told Miss Sheldon I want her?

HALLEN. Yes, madam, she's here.

(*Exeunt* HALLEN *and* WEEKS.)

JO. (*Entering from the left.*) They're clamoring for you, mother. Mr. Botes and Vic are at the head of the big staircase to receive the Grand Duchess.

MRS. S. And Prince Adolf!

JO. No, he's at Buckingham Palace at a state dinner, and is coming on by himself.

MRS. S. Is there ink and paper anywhere? (*pointedly*)—down here?

JO. (*Motioning to the left.*) In there—there always is.

MRS. S. I want to write a message for you to take to Mr. Botes. I have my gloves on. Does he know your handwriting?

Jo. No, I don't suppose so. What difference does that make? I'll write it if you like.

Mrs. S. No, after all it's private business; perhaps he'd rather—

Jo. Well, make haste or you'll be late. How lovely it is out here—I wonder if he'll— Ready, Mother?

Mrs. S. One minute. I'm sealing it—you won't mind, will you?

Jo. Not at all. It looks to me as if you and Mr. Botes were going into a partnership.

Mrs. S. (*Lightly.*) Well, if I could be as lucky in business as Mr. Botes—

Jo. You could n't be because you're so generous. Even Mr. Botes' own children acknowledge he's the hardest fisted, most miserly nice person they ever knew.

Mrs. S. Give that to Mr. Botes without a word, except that I'll join him in a moment.

Jo. He's frightfully bored at the idea of having the old lady on his hands and at the same time overjoyed at the chance. And he's told me already three times what the ball is costing him.

(*She starts to leave.*)

(*Enter* Hallen.)

Hallen. Here is Mrs. Sheldon, your Royal Highness.

(*Enter the* Prince.)

Prince. Goodt eefning, Laties!

(*Both women curtsey and say "good evening."* Mrs. Sheldon *turns to the seat at the right.*)

Prince. I was lucky to find you bose together!

Jo. And you are still more lucky, sir, in that I am obliged to leave you at once, if your Royal Highness will allow me,—

Prince. Please don't so Royal Highness me, it make me what you—Miss Sheldon 'ave call "tired" not?

Jo. (*To him, in mock aside.*) Beware! Mrs. Sheldon is very attractive, and you see—she's blonde—she's nearly blonde.

(*As she leaves the stage, the* Prince *starts to follow her.*)

Mrs. S. Prince Adolf.

Prince. (*Turning to her.*) Yah, Madame?

Mrs. S. I had intended asking for this interview. Will you forgive me—if I speak very, *very frankly?*

(*The* Prince *steps toward her—embarrassed.*)

Prince. Yah, bitte. If you please.

Mrs. S. People are gossiping very openly about my step-daughter and your Royal Highness.

Prince. Yes, I have heard dat today, and I think only of what I shall do for to make Miss Sheldon forgif me.

Mrs. S. Thank you! It will be easy, Prince Adolf, if you love her.

Prince. If I love her! Ach, Gott! with all mein hearts, with all mein—what you call der oder ting—mein souls—mein souls!

Mrs. S. Then believe me, sir, Jo will forgive you because—(*pauses a moment, then finishes in a lowered voice, but impressively*)—she loves you too.

Prince. Nein, nein! She haf always make joke at me.

Mrs. S. If you knew her as well as I do, you'd know that proved she cared.

Prince. And I may tell to her dat I loaf her!

Mrs. S. Yes. And I speak for her father as well as myself. (*Conversationally.*) You know a marriage between your Royal Highness and Jo can't be the conventional one, but we are willing to trust her happiness to you, and so I beg you to put a stop to scandal before it begins, and speak to Jo tonight.

Prince. I tank you one million times! (*Bows and kisses her hand.*) I shall speak with her so soon as possible when she shall allow me.

(*Enter* Hallen.)

Hallen. Beg pardon, ma'am, Her Royal Highness is arriving. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. S. I must help receive.

Prince. (*Aside, as he leaves.*) She bores me.

(Mrs. Sheldon *meets* Jo, Vic, Cyril *in the doors on the left.*)

Mrs. S. I'm going to receive the Grand Duchess.

(*They all greet each other as they meet.*)

Cyril. Excuse me, but I am very busy.

(*He goes to the bench with card.*)

Jo. What are they going to do with her Royal Highness?

Victoria. They're going to show her through the rooms and then dump her and her suite on a dais in the Ball Room.

Jo. What *are* you doing there, Cyril?

Cyril. Oh, I'll put you on. This is the Spooners' Retreat, you know, or will know before the evening's over.

Jo. It depends upon who shows it to me.
Cyril. How many guesses do you give me?
Jo. None.
Cyril. Well, I'm giving it a finishing touch.
Jo. (*Reads on the card.*) "A friendly hint to Rheumatic couples."
Victoria. What?
Cyril. No, no. *Romantic* couples. Listen, Jo—you may find this very useful.
Jo. You silly person.
Cyril. (*Reading card.*) "Press the electric knob hanging on the side of the lamp if you want moonlight only." Watch! (*Presses button and out go all the lights, and only moonlight pours in through the glass roof on the marble bench.*) Would n't that make anyone feel billy-and-coo-y?
Victoria. Well, rather.
Jo. A little too light still for the Countess Casavetti, is n't it? She would want the moon on an electric button too.
(*She presses a button, and the lights come on again.*)
Cyril. O, well, of course it 's really all planned just for you and Adolf.
Vic and Jo. Cyril!
Jo. Allow me to inform you, Mr. Scallywag Cyril, that Prince Adolf and myself parted at the fête on Saturday at sword points.
Cyril. (*Pins the card on the bushes.*) Well, if you want to make up, drag him here, and press the button, the *moon* will do the rest.
Jo. Our little misunderstanding—was really Vic's fault.
Vic. Mine?
Jo. Yes, I took your advice when I read his hand, and told him a blonde woman would be his destiny.
Cyril. Clever Vic! She was evidently trying to sneak one for herself.
Vic. (*Laughing.*) It did n't do me much good.
Cyril. Was that the third or fifth time you told his hand?
Vic. (*Laughing.*) What?
Jo. None of your business.
Cyril. (*Laughing.*) Jo hung on to his hand like a terrier to a rat.
Jo. (*Becomes serious and a little angry.*) Now look here, Cyril, I 've had just about all the teasing on this subject I care to put up with. It is n't funny any longer; I don't care at all—or—in that way—for Prince Adolf—any more than he cares for me. Under the circumstances any more of your teasing will not be in exactly the best of taste.
Cyril. (*Wilts grotesquely.*) Crushed!
Jo. (*Slowly losing her anger.*) Well, so you ought to be.
Cyril. (*Rises, goes on his knees, touches the floor with his forehead before her.*) Forgive me!
Jo. (*Laughing.*) I wish I *could n't.*
Vic. (*Looking off.*) Cyril! Quick! They 're coming!
(*The* Duchess, Mr. Botes, *and* Mrs. Sheldon *are seen coming through the room at left.* Cyril *gets up hurriedly. They enter.*)
Botes. This, ma'am, is the Flirtation Corner.
Duchess. Ach! Schön, sehr schön.
Botes. And here are the young people. My son and daughter—
Duchess. Goot eefning.
Botes. And the Goddess of Liberty come over from the States.
Jo. Only to Cuba and the Philippines as yet, your Royal Highness.
Duchess. I see Liberty vas becoming a leetle crowded over dere. She vas beginning to emigrate—(*looking at her*)—Not? So! I find it not easy to recognize the gypsy. (*She notices* Jo's *embarrassment. To* Cyril.) You vas in love mit Mees Sheldon—not?
Cyril. Oh, something awful, ma'am.
Vic. Silly boy!
Jo. (*Laughing.*) Oh, no, not at all, ma'am. Cyril knows me too well.
Duchess. (*Laughing.*) So?
Vic. (*Comes to right of* Jo *and puts her left arm around her.*) That is not true, ma'am. To *know* my American friend is to love her the more.
Duchess. So!
Jo. (*Laughing.*) Miss Botes is my best friend, ma'am, she is prejudiced.
Duchess. So—after all, handsome is vat handsome doos. Not?
Vic. Yes, and she does, ma'am.
Cyril. Yes, ma'am, she *doos.*
Duchess. So. (*To* Jo.) Compliment. Are there other rooms?
Botes. No, ma'am.
Duchess. Den I shall ask will you let me speag mit you a leedle and Mrs. Sheldon here?
Botes. Certainly, ma'am.
(Mrs Sheldon *looks startled.*)
Duchess. (*To* Jo.) It ees not fair for an old woman to monopolize der loafers'

corner. But I vill promise not geep him long.

BOTES. Vic, you 'd better be looking after the guests.

MRS. S. Jo, go in the garden, dear, and I will join you.

JO. No, I think I 'd better help Vic.

VIC. Yes, do.

(VIC *and* JO *leave together.*)

CYRIL. I want to see if the lanterns have been placed all right.

(*Exit through door at back.*)

DUCHESS. Will you all please to sit you down, Misses. (MRS. S. *sits on bench,* BOTES *sits on seat at left of bench.*) Mine nephew has yesterday told me all. Ach, lieber Adolf. It vas beautiful how he loaf her. And so sad. (*She gets tearful.*) He swears he shall kill himself mitout her. It vas peautiful.

MRS. S. You sympathize with the young people, ma'am?

DUCHESS. With all mein hearts. Aber, I vas nutting. It vas the King who vas der master of us all. When I haf seen Miss Sheldon I telegraphed to mein brudder and I haf only just now received his answer before I come tonide, and it makes necessary dat I say it out to you at once.

(BOTES *and* MRS. S. *exchange a questioning look.*)

DUCHESS. Mein brudder does not know what you mean quite about Mees Sheldon and der Prince Adolf.

BOTES. I beg your pardon, ma'am?

DUCHESS. You 'ave them brought much together, not?

BOTES. But always at the urgent request of Prince Adolf, ma'am.

DUCHESS. You had made much better, Misses, to have taken your daughter away from here before dis—

MRS. S. Miss Sheldon is only my stepdaughter. She is her own mistress.

DUCHESS. She haf not the air of an intriguante, but she shall haf known dat a marriage between her and a heir to a throne vas not possible.

MRS. S. Perhaps my stepdaughter may have been persuaded by Prince Adolf that such was not the case.

DUCHESS. Ooch. You know what loafers will say—you haf had loafers, Misses, not?

MRS. S. (*With a cynical smile.*) I have been married twice, ma'am.

DUCHESS. So? Compliment! Aber, Mr. Botes, you must not have encouraged deir meetings. You vas one of us at Eastphalia, King George haf very much anger mit you for dis.

BOTES. (*Looking at* MRS. SHELDON.) I assure you, ma'am, I did not know—

MRS. S. (*Quickly.*) If the young people wanted to meet, ma'am, they would have managed it somewhere in spite of Mr. Botes. (*She looks meaningly at* BOTES.)

DUCHESS. So. Well, after dat I haf seen Mees Sheldon on Saturday I haf written a long letter to the King all about vat I find vas der danger for Adolf and dis message vas tooken at His Majesty, by Colonel Toochberg, who haf come met me ofer from Eastphalia for dat. He is arrived dis afternoon because I haf, just now before I come here, received of His Majesty mein answer. He dispatches me by wire that Prince Adolf shall return to Eastphalia by der Egspress tomorrow. Prince Adolf shall be at once sent to Manchuria as our attaché of the Russian army. (MRS. S. *smiles to herself.*) I haf alles dis to tell mein nephew here tonight.

(*A long silence—the* DUCHESS *rises—all rise,* BOTES *goes toward the fountain.*)

DUCHESS. I vas very sorry dat I must speak all dose disagreeable tings. I loaf loaf, and I loaf mein nephew, and she vas very beautiful—Mees Sheldon. Ach! if I shall let myself tink of it, it vas terrible, loaf's young dream. Ach!

(*Sniffles.*)

MRS. S. You have loved yourself, once, ma'am, perhaps?

DUCHESS. Lieber Gott, yah. I have loafed ven I vas a leedle girl. A soldier, just a common soldier. His fader vas a bootcher. Aber Himmel, he vas peautiful, just like a imache. He stood on sentry duty half of efery week outside der palace door, and we haf neffer spoke except mit our eyes. But we haf loafd two years. (*She is in tears, and blows her nose heavily. After a moment's pause—she steps forward.*) So, und den I haf married mein cousin, the Grand Duke, because I vas a Princess—so it always vas—and always shall be—we must obey the laws of our family, and of our country, and of our King. Mein nephew and meinself shall return to Eastphalia tomorrow. You will like to have a few words with Mrs. Sheldon. May I please ask you to call your nice son to take me back to the ball room?

BOTES. Thank you, ma'am.

(*He goes back of the fountain, to door back at the rear and is heard calling "Cyril—Cyril"—answered by a distant "whoop" from* CYRIL.)

MRS. S. (*Aside to* DUCHESS.) Your Royal Highness, is there not such a thing possible as a Morganatic marriage in your country?

DUCHESS. Yah, but I tink mein brudder shall neffer consent to dat. It would make one scandal I tink mit der people. And any way der King commands us to come back tomorrow. Dat is der best finish. Time shall cure, not? You say yourself you haf twice married—then you shall haf forgot once loving—not?

(*Re-enter* CYRIL—*followed by* BOTES. BOTES *stays by the left entrance.*)

CYRIL. I'm sorry you won't stay in the Spooners' Corner with me, ma'am!

(*Offers his arm.*)

DUCHESS. (*Laughing heartily.*) Ach—you vas a nice boy. (CYRIL *bows.*) I hope I haf showed tagt. It vas not easy to do mein dooty, I vas glad it vas ofer. And now, Mr. Botes, I am going with all mein hearts to enjoy your peautiful pardy.

(*Takes his arm.* BOTES *bows, and the* DUCHESS *and* CYRIL *exeunt.*)

BOTES. Well then, it's all off, is it?

(*Disappointed.*)

MRS. S. Not at all. (*Emphatically.*) Jo gave you a note just now—did n't you open it?

BOTES. Yes, but you can't hold me to this agreement now.

MRS S. If Jo is still willing to carry out her share, why not?

BOTES. How can she with the Prince's father determined against it?

MRS. S. Suppose the Prince *disobeys his father?* It would n't be the first time in history, royal or otherwise.

BOTES. But is it likely?

MRS. S. It's more than likely, it's certain. I have had a talk with him, only a few minutes ago. Mr. Botes, it's all the more necessary now for you, if you want an Eastphalian title, to stand by us. With King George angry, and holding you to blame for the present state of affairs—your only chance must be the Prince Adolf.

BOTES. When do you want the money?

MRS. S. You promised to get it ready for me today.

BOTES. And I have. The securities are in the hands of the Bank. All I have to do is to write out a cheque.

MRS. S. Write it out *tonight.*

BOTES. (*Pale and surprised.*) Tonight!

MRS. S. (*Pleading.*) Well, early tomorrow morning. Mr. Botes—(*puts her left arm on his right shoulder*)—you 've made me trust you. I 've opened my heart to you as I 've never done to any other man. Don't disappoint me. Please don't.

BOTES. (*Facing her, half humorous, half cynical.*) You know it 's about the poorest business I ever went into. It would take more than a day to find any real security in it.

MRS. S. But think what the Barony will mean to you and your Cyril. Without it you have now already everything in the business world—with it, you will have the social world at your feet, too. That world which has up to now turned its back on you and snubbed your son—you 'll have that world to do what you like with, men and women. For *women* won't resist you, that I know—

(BOTES *turns to her—she has her left arm on his right shoulder.*)

BOTES. (*Turning to her.*) You!!!

MRS. S. Yes, I! (*Looks him straight in the face, holding her face close to his.* BOTES *looks and slowly bends nearer to her—she very slightly moves a tiny bit nearer and lifts her face—he kisses her.*)

MRS. S. (*Looks down.*) You don't really dislike me then?

(*With passion in her voice.*)

BOTES. I fancy I like you,—(MRS. S. *looks at him*)—all that 's good for me.

(*Keeps his eye on her.*)

MRS. S. (*Laughing.*) You brute, you. You know you hurt my feelings by that. You make me wretched.

BOTES. Well, cheer up. You shall have the cheque tomorrow morning. (MRS. S. *turns.*) Oh, by the bye, is it to be made out to you or to Miss Jo?

MRS. S. To neither—to George W. Prenter.

BOTES. What name?

MRS. S. Prenter—T—E—R—. President of the Central National Bank of New York. Does n't that give you confidence?

BOTES. (*Smiling.*) Oh, I don't know.

MRS. S. Send Jo here, and I 'll bring the Prince.

BOTES. Very good.

MRS. S. And do forget how foolish I was just now.

BOTES. Forget it! I hope not. Not if it costs me £40,000!

(*With a smile, he exits at left.*)

MRS. S. You prosaic ogre, you.

(MRS. S. *turns to the fountain, wets her handkerchief in water, presses it to her lips and to her forehead and goes and sits on the bench.*)

(JO *enters.*)

JO. It strikes me, Mrs. Sheldon, that you are monopolizing the Lovers' Retreat—I shall have to report you to father.

MRS. S. My dear girl, this time I 'm only holding Cupid's bower for *you.*

JO. Really! Much obliged. (*Looking.*) But as Cupid's Bower for me it is a little too *lonely* even with you in it to meet all the requirements.

MRS. S. Wait till I wave my wand and the Fairy Prince comes.

JO. Very well, I 'll wait. But meanwhile what did Mr. Botes mean by saying just now, "Don't worry, I've seen your mother. It 's all right"?

MRS. S. He means your happiness, my dear.

JO. What has my happiness to do with that selfish old person?

MRS. S. (*Secretively and impressively.*) Jo!

JO. What?

MRS. S. I 've had a very interesting and very important talk with Prince Adolf.

JO. Oh!—I told him to beware of a blonde woman!

MRS. S. Shall I warn you?

JO. No!!! Warn me of *what?*

MRS. S. He 's out in the garden now.

JO. (*Jealous.*) With whom?

MRS. S. (*Smiling.*) Alone.

JO. O well, serves him right. He was very rude to me when I told his hand Saturday.

MRS. S. He says on the contrary that you always make fun of him.

JO. If he knew me he 'd know that was a sign that I liked him.

MRS. S. That 's what I told him.

JO. (*Really pleased.*) How dared you! I am very angry.

MRS. S. He is waiting out there all this time alone for a chance to see you.

JO. Oh, he probably has a cigar, and no man 's very lonely when he has a *cigar.*

MRS. S. Jo, it 's coming out all right; he loves you.

JO. He does n't.

MRS. S. He told me so.

JO. Well, he 'd much better have told me.

MRS. S. Will you give him the chance?

JO. No.

MRS. S. You won't?

JO. *Yes.*

MRS. S. He 's waiting for a signal from me that you are here, alone.

JO. Don't you give it!

MRS. S. (*At door, at back.*) *What?*

JO. I mean *do.*

(MRS. S. *goes to door at back, and calls "Prince Adolf!"*)

PRINCE. (*Off stage.*) Yes, madame.

MRS. S. May I speak to you a moment?

PRINCE. I comst.

(MRS. S. *nods and exits quickly.*)

(PRINCE ADOLF *enters from the back, comes forward to the left of the fountain.*)

PRINCE. (*Looks about.*) Yes, madame, I vas here. (*Laughing.*) I tink you vas your mother.

JO. Thank you. I 'm sorry to disappoint you. (*She leans upon the basin of the fountain.*) Do you like gold fish?

PRINCE. I don't know—because—why?

(*Leaning on the opposite side of fountain.*)

JO. O, I don't know. I was just trying to make conversation.

PRINCE. (*Left of fountain.*) They vas slippery, like to a girl.

JO. I thought you might like them because they 're blonde.

PRINCE. Miss Jo, I wish you shall be serious mit me dis night.

JO. Not before supper?

PRINCE. *When* shall you be serious?

JO. Well; if I must make a positive date, I should say about two thirty I shall begin to feel rather serious.

PRINCE. Very goot. And while we wait you shall give to me my future again.

JO. Oh no, I will not.

PRINCE. Bitte! Let me gif yours at you then now?

JO. No, thank you. I know that you 'd tell me that I am a flirt.

PRINCE. But *are* you?

JO. I am!

PRINCE. And you haf flirted mit me?

JO. I have.

PRINCE. For why?

JO. For fun.

PRINCE. How was dat "for fun"?

JO. It is like when you play a game.

PRINCE. What game?

JO. (*Desperate.*) O mercy! I never heard so many questions! (*She looks at*

him a second, smiling without speaking and hears the music in the ball room.) They're dancing, Prince Adolf, don't you want to dance?

PRINCE. (*Goes behind fountain, close to her.*) Mit you? Yah. Always.

JO. No, thank you—I don't care to dance.

PRINCE. Den I stay here all der night with you.

JO. O no, you won't. I shall go to bed about three o'clock.

PRINCE. You shall get tired?

JO. *Very.*

PRINCE. I shall bore you?

JO. (*Satirically.*) O no! (*Pretends to yawn.*) Excuse me.

PRINCE. You was already bored—not?

JO. Suppose *I* ask a few questions now. Are n't *you* bored?

PRINCE. Yah.

JO. O really—why?

PRINCE. Because I tink your mother have tell me lies.

JO. What did Mother Lena tell you?

PRINCE. I am ashamed to say.

JO. O, Lena!! Was it so bad as that?

PRINCE. She say dat you loaf me.

JO. How dared she? (*Very angry.*) No, it is n't true.

PRINCE. Yah, she say you loaf me.

JO. Oh! (*Her arm and her hand with her glove on go into the water.*) Oh!

PRINCE. O allow me. Allow me dat I dry it, please.

JO. No, it 's horrid. I 'll take it off.

PRINCE. (*Follows her.*) Allow to me.

JO. Yes, it is so horrid. I think I will let you.

PRINCE. Tank you. (*Unbuttons glove.*)

JO. Yes, but please hurry and take it off.

PRINCE. So. (*Starting very slowly to take it off.*) I was afraid to make too quick, when I might hurt you.

JO. O, you need n't be afraid of that at all.

PRINCE. Yah, Mrs. Sheldon haf said you loaf me.

JO. I heard you the first time you said that. Mrs. Sheldon unfortunately sometimes wanders in her speech.

PRINCE. How vas dat?

JO. (*With pretended hauteur.*) I am surprised that you listened to her.

PRINCE. Listened? Gott! I will listen to dat all mein life!

JO. (*Very grandiloquently.*) I 'm ashamed of my mother. If you would just pull a little on the glove I think it would come off without any difficulty, now, thank you.

PRINCE. (*Smoothing it gently.*) But if I pull her I shall spoil her.

JO. O, it 's spoiled already. If you don't pull, I will.

PRINCE. Very goot—I pull. (*He pulls off the glove.*) Your arm vas vet—I shall make him dry.

JO. Thank you, I shall *dry him myself.*

PRINCE. Mit what?

JO. I—don't—know—

PRINCE. I will make him dry mit mein handkerchief. (*He does so.*)

JO. You 're really working very hard this evening, are n't you?

PRINCE. O this is nutting.

JO. (*Sits on the bench at right.*) O really. That will do then. Thank you.

PRINCE. No, *I* thank *you.*

JO. Sit down, you must be tired.

PRINCE. No! No!

JO. Oh!

PRINCE. No, I was tired only from the teasing of me so much by you.

JO. Prince Adolf!

PRINCE. Yes? Yes?

JO. I want to explain the foolish remarks Mrs. Sheldon made, and it is not teasing this time, not a game.

PRINCE. Yah.

JO. No!

PRINCE. I mean *no.*

JO. Well, you must say what you mean, I am going to.

PRINCE. Very well, I will too—*I loaf you.*

JO. No, no.

PRINCE. Yes—*yes.*

JO. No. Listen to me before you say anything more. Mrs. Sheldon of course was jesting and did n't mean what she said to you. And you and I have been like two children playing with fire.

PRINCE. Define fire.

JO. Maybe—still, it 's time we grew up. I frankly like you too much, Prince Adolf—to keep on. You are a Prince going back to your country to be King some day, and I am an American girl going back to *my* country—

PRINCE. Where you shall reign ofer many hearts, dat I am sure.

JO. I am a *woman,* I don't want to reign, I want to be the subject. (*He lifts her hand quietly and kisses it.*) Now that is the end of our flirtation and the beginning of our friendship, is n't it? (*Rising.*) Promise me you will forget what Mrs. Sheldon said. It was n't true.

PRINCE. Not true? (*She turns away and slowly withdraws her hand, but she does not answer.*) Nein. (*Pleading.*) O, I cannot neffer forget dat. Besides, I want not to forget. For all dat time out dere until you haf called me, I haf thought you loafed me. Come. (*Takes her hand.*) Look. (*Leading her to back by door.*) Look, do you see the stars out there?

JO. Yes, I see myriads of them.

(*The* PRINCE *turns when* JO *turns—and they face each other at door.*)

PRINCE. I haf to tell each one, "she loaf me," "she loaf me." Dey shall neffer allow me dat I forget. I vas happy ven I belief dat.

JO. Why did n't you tell the stars that you loved me?

PRINCE. No use.

JO. Oh!

PRINCE. Nein! Dey haf know dat already yet one long time.

JO. How?

PRINCE. Because I haf dem told dat efery night after der first efening I haf met you.

JO. (*Softly.*) Yes?

PRINCE. Yah. I walked me home efery night since den just to be alone mit dose stars, dey vas mein goot friends—dey haf keep always ofer me—I see dem der first time to Pall Mall and dere I tell dem first. Den I see dem to Piccadilly. Dey vas ofer mein head in Park Lane last night. In Berkely Square der night before. And alles times dey haf looked at me and winked mit deir eyes when I tell dem. And dey answer to me "Yah, our leedle bruder, wir know that you love her." And when dis night I did tell dem der great good news, dat you was not one flirt, but also you haf loaf me, O how dey dance for joy mit me. And one haf sent me down one kees.

JO. A kiss?

PRINCE. Yah. Mr. Cyril was in der garten and he haf called it a "shooting star," aber I know besser, it was one kees.

JO. Look and see if you can't see another now.

PRINCE. For luck?

(*He looks at her, then, on her nod, looks out of door at back.*)

JO. For luck.

(*She softly rises, slowly leans forward and kisses him. He turns quickly and seizes her in his arms.*)

PRINCE. Goot, it ees no lie? you loaf me?

JO. No lie. I love you.

PRINCE. (*With his arms about her.*) But—but—

JO. Don't tell the stars anything more, I'm jealous of them. Tell it all to me.

PRINCE. There vas no stars outside now, none, I see dem all, in side in your eyes.

(*Music stops and Vic off the stage calls "Jo."*)

VIC. Jo!

JO. Yes.

(CYRIL *pushes* VIC *on*—CYRIL *is seen in the door at the left.*)

VIC. What is it?

JO. What is what?

VIC. Cyril said you wanted me.

JO. I don't. No such thing.

(VIC *looks at* CYRIL. CYRIL *exits.*)

VIC. O, excuse me—(*Very embarrassed.*) I'm very sorry to have interrupted you—

(*Edging away.*)

JO. O not at all—you have n't interrupted us—won't you sit down?

VIC. No I—excuse me—I'm sorry—but—I think the Duchess is going soon.

PRINCE. Miss Botes, I hope der musickers will play some American music.

VIC. I'll see that they do before you go. (*There is an awkward pause—suddenly.*) I'll ask them now.

(*Exits at the left.*)

JO. Well, we're sorry you can't stay. Good-bye.

PRINCE. Miss Botes are blonde—What about my future?

JO. Oh, never mind Miss Botes. I'm blonde at heart.

(*She moves to the seat and sits on the bench at right of the fountain. The* PRINCE *takes her left hand as she sits.*)

PRINCE. Who else do you loaf besides me—what men?

JO. My father.

PRINCE. Dat is all of us?

JO. Yes, but I love him *very, very, very much.*

PRINCE. As much as you loaf me?

JO. (*Slowly.*) No.

PRINCE. Half as much as you love me?

JO. No.

(*She lowers her face and turns away, because of her tears.*)

PRINCE. What does he call you—by name?

JO. (*With emotion in her voice and not turning.*) His girl Jo.

PRINCE. Den also I will call you "His girl Jo."

JO. No, please don't. Call me "*Your* girl Jo."

PRINCE. Yah, I will. "Your girl Jo."

JO. No, you don't understand. Whose girl am I?

PRINCE. Mine!

JO. Yes. Then that 's what you 're to call me.

PRINCE. O yes, I see. *Mein girl Jo!*

JO. (*Seriously, softly.*) I *hope* so.

PRINCE. Mein girl Jo—mein wife.

JO. Yes.

PRINCE. You are not afraid of a fight?

JO. A fight?

PRINCE. To get us married.

JO. How a fight?

PRINCE. Mein fader was very angry.

JO. I 'm sorry. What can we do? Perhaps—

PRINCE. Nein, nein. Der was no perhaps. I haf told to mein Aunt I loaf you, and dat when you loaf me, she haf come to London for nuttings.

JO. She came to prevent?

PRINCE. Yah. But I haf told her I was a damn nant.

JO. *Adamant* you mean?

PRINCE. Yah. My fader loaf me. I tink he will give way for me.

JO. And if he won't?

PRINCE. He must. How much do you loaf me, my girl Jo?

JO. How many stars did you see in the garden?

PRINCE. Ach! More den I shall count.

JO. Just so much I "loaf" you. More than I can count! I 've told myself over and over again that love between us was impossible; I know everything is against us.

PRINCE. We will come over alles—alles.

JO. Can we? *Can* we? A hundred times a day I 've determined I would never let you see inside my heart. Nor let you open yours to me. And yet—at the very first real chance—I 've forgotten everything—everything.

PRINCE. Except dat I loaf you. You haf not forgot dat.

JO. No, when I saw how deep inside your heart I was already—I could n't keep myself outside your arms.

PRINCE. Meine Liebste.

JO. Adolf. I don't see how it can be, and yet if you think I 'm worth the fighting for, I 'll fight with you. Because—I love you.

DUCHESS. (*Off stage.*) Tank you for bringing me. I could haf guessed mein nephew vas in der Loafers' Cosy Corner.

(JO *and the* PRINCE *start and separate and look at each other.*)

PRINCE. I will tell it to her now.

(*They rise as the* DUCHESS *enters.*)

DUCHESS. Good eefning, Adolf. (*To* JO.) Good eefning again. (*To Adolf.*) I was sorry to take you away but I shall be going now, mein nephew.

PRINCE. Excuse me, Aunt Caroline, when I do not go mit you. I shall stay a leetle longer by Miss Sheldon, because, liebe Tante, she haf just now done the honor of saying she will be my wife.

DUCHESS. Adolf!

PRINCE. She loaf me after all—

DUCHESS. Your fader?—

PRINCE. —When he know how much I loaf her—

DUCHESS. You haf no right to ask of her what you know is impossible.

PRINCE. Aber. I will make it possible, when mein fader know how good and peautiful she are.

DUCHESS. I haf received a dispatch of your father after you haf left dis eefning. His Majesty haf seen Colonel Toochberg, and orders you to leave mit me tomorrow. You shall find a dispatch of your own by your house when you go in.

PRINCE. I will answer make to mein fader. I will send at him a dispatch meinself mit explanation dat I cannot go.

DUCHESS. It shall be no good, my tear poy. You must go back by me. It is the King, your fader's command. His Majesty haf ordered dat Prince Adolf go by der noon express out to Manchuria to represent our army dere mit Russia. I regret alle, aber ich habe, I have warning given to Mrs. Sheldon and Mr. Botes. Gude nit. (JO *curtseys and the* DUCHESS *turns to* ADOLF.) You will stay here a little to say good-bye. Goot. I will wait a half hour longer in der ball room. Eggscoose me, I was very sorry. (*Takes* JO'S *hand.*) I haf loafed meinself—forgif me. But dis marriage cannot neffer be, mein dear young lady. Der throne is Adolf's destiny, and a Queen of royal birth must share it with him. Dat is der law of centuries in all our countries, and he cannot overturn dat now in one eefning. Good-bye. To Manchuria, the day after tomorrow.

JO. You have n't gone yet?

PRINCE. That was true.

Jo. I 'm not frightened if you 're not.

PRINCE. Der King mein fader will do alles he can for to separate us.

Jo. I don't believe any father of yours could be so cruel. Not when he sees you care so much for me—how much do you care for me?

PRINCE. Alles—alles.

Jo. That 's almost enough. And when he sees it is my life he is trying to take away from me, no man who is your father, King or no King, would be so cruel as that. I don't believe any old laws made half a million years ago can separate a man and a woman today, who honestly love each other as much as—

PRINCE. —As I do you. (*They embrace.*) You haf belief in me?

Jo. I haf belief in you.

(*Looking him straight in the eyes.*)

PRINCE. I shall find me a way out for us.

Jo. There 's your "Amerikaner," Wagner.

PRINCE. I like dat. (*With his arm around her.*) Come, tomorrow we shall make plans. Tonight let us forget alles troubles—not? (*They sit on bench—a pause.*) My girl Jo! I hope that our stars can see us.

ACT THIRD.

A living room at MR. BOTES' *London house. On the right there is a settee, with an arm chair near it and toward the rear a writing table. On the left there is a couch, and by the window on the left a small cane chair. There is an open fire place, without fire, and other appropriate furniture.* MR. BOTES *is sitting on the couch reading a paper. He rises, crosses the room and returns to the couch, evidently in a bad humor.* HALLEN *comes in and stands near the couch.*

BOTES. (*Sitting on the couch.*) Are n't any of the family down yet?

HALLEN. Mr. Cyril 's at breakfast, sir.

BOTES. Good humor?

HALLEN. Something hawful, sir! Threw his heggs at me and swore for giving 'im bad 'uns. (*Respectfully.*) When I 'm sure they was as fresh, sir, as if I 'd laid 'em myself this morning.

BOTES. And the ladies? Out of sorts too, I suppose.

HALLEN. Yes, sir, leastways I 'ear as Miss Victoria changed 'er mind three times as to whether she 'd heat or *not* heat, sir!

BOTES. Humph!

HALLEN. We ain't 'eard hanything hagainst Miss Sheldon's spirits, sir. She rang 'er bell before we 'd 'ad hour breakfast, sir. Sent Weeks hout with a cable to Hamerica. Yes, sir. Telling 'er father of 'er hengagement to 'is Royal 'ighness.

BOTES. (*Turning to* HALLEN *angrily.*) It was n't *your* business.

HALLEN. No, sir—but—I read it really without thinking, sir—very fine party last night, sir.

BOTES. Was it?

HALLEN. Yes, sir, excuse me, sir.

BOTES. Ought to have been. It cost enough.

HALLEN. Did it, sir?

(MRS. SHELDON *opens the door and enters, dressed to go out.* BOTES *turns and sees her, rising.*)

(HALLEN *exits.*)

BOTES. (*On his dignity.*) Good morning, madam.

MRS. S. (*With forced good humor, coming to front of arm chair.*) Good morning.

BOTES. (*Standing and looking at her.*) Good morning.

(*There is a moment's pause.*)

MRS. S. Well! Now all your doubts and fears must be at rest.

BOTES. I don't know, so far so good.

MRS. S. O come! This is only the feeling of "the morning after." You heard the Prince announce to me last night that Jo had promised to be his wife. Mr. Botes, is it right of you to tantalize me like this? The cheque must go to America with Mr. Wilton who leaves today at one o'clock. You ought n't to make me ask for it again.

BOTES. Of course I ought n't to have agreed to give you the cheque until the marriage had taken place.

MRS. S. Without your cheque today there could be no marriage. Come, you hold our share of the bargain and you promised me your cheque in exchange.

BOTES. You made yourself very agreeable last night—and I promised a good deal that I would n't have in the cold light of this morning.

MRS. S. I could n't help showing you my gratitude. You are a masterful man, one that appeals to a woman like me, per-

haps more strongly than I should like to acknowledge, for the very reason that I know you can take care of yourself. Keep faith with us as we have with you.

BOTES. To tell the truth I almost wish I had n't.

MRS. S. How do you mean?

BOTES. I 'm not sure I 'm not ashamed of the whole business.

MRS. S. I don't understand you.

BOTES. O, I know we 're all more or less in the same boat. You 're the middleman, and Jo 's selling and I 'm buying.

MRS. S. Buying what you want, and what you agreed to buy.

BOTES. Yes, but after all it 's a pretty low down business for an established man of my age, and for a nice seeming girl like Jo.

MRS. S. Business is business!

BOTES. Yes, but when women mix up in it— I don't know— It seems dirtier than it does for men! I 'm ashamed of my daughter's friend! There, now it 's out and being ashamed of her, damn it all, has made me ashamed of myself.

MRS. S. Ashamed?

BOTES. Yes! I 've got a little of my daughter Vic in me, after all.

MRS. S. But you gave us your word.

BOTES. Yes, I know. And of course I 'll stand by it, if I have to, but— (*As* MRS. S. *places her hand on his arm he puts her hand away.*) No! No! Let me keep my practical senses, please!

MRS. S. And your word—come— Don't keep me waiting any longer, or I shall think you are taking advantage of a woman to break your word.

BOTES. (*Rising.*) No, that could never be said of my father's son. (*He looks straight in her face and she looks back into his. There is a pause while he takes a cheque from his pocket amongst other papers.*) Here is your cheque.

MRS. S. (*Taking it.*) Thank you. Now I must hurry to meet Mr. Wilton at Euston Station.

(VIC *enters and meets* MRS. SHELDON *in the doorway.* VIC *is in ill humor also, but takes it more good naturedly.*)

VIC. Good morning. (MRS. SHELDON *passes out without replying.*) Dear me! Mrs. Sheldon seems to have got out of the wrong side of bed too! How are you, father? I 'm cross as two sticks.

BOTES. I 'm beastly!

VIC. Don't let 's give any more parties. I have n't slept a wink, the servants are too disagreeable to live with; I 've got a ripping headache and wish I were dead, or married.

BOTES. No such luck—I wish you were the latter—hand me my paper—and then I 'd take chambers and live at a club.

VIC. Never! What would be the good then of all the smart friends you 're fishing for and that title you and Cyril have your hearts set on.

BOTES. Oh, damn the smart friends,—*and* the title this morning!

(*Enter* HALLEN, *who gives* BOTES *a card.*)

HALLEN. Would like to see you, sir—important.

BOTES. (*Reading the card.*) Mr. George Rudding, representing Streeter & Company, Bond Street.

VIC. (*Crossly.*) The jewelers.

HALLEN. He asked first for Mrs. Sheldon, but she 's gone out. He called yesterday for Mrs. Sheldon and she sent word she was out. And he 's called before, sir.

BOTES. Well, tell him to call again within the hour, when Mrs. Sheldon will be in, and then if she won't see him, then I will.

HALLEN. Yes, sir.

VIC. Hallen!

HALLEN. Yes, miss?

VIC. Where are the letters?

HALLEN. There are n't hany for you, miss.

VIC. Are n't any?

HALLEN. No, miss.

VIC. (*Irritably.*) I never heard of such a thing.

BOTES. Hallen.

HALLEN. Yes, sir?

BOTES. Call me a cab.

HALLEN. At once, sir?

BOTES. Well, when did you suppose I wanted it—next week?

HALLEN. Excuse me, sir—but—

BOTES. O, go to the devil!

HALLEN. Yes, sir! (*Exits.*)

VIC. (*Quickly and loudly.*) Father!

BOTES. O, leave me alone. Vic, you can't read a paper through in this house.

(*There is a pause during which* CYRIL *enters, glum—he yawns—sits down.* BOTES *and* VIC *yawn.* BOTES *closes eyes and drops the paper on his knees.*)

VIC. (*Leaning forward, staring vacantly, with a dead voice.*) Good morning Cyril.

CYRIL. (*To* VIC.) Morning. (*Yawns.*) Morning, governor!

BOTES. Morning.

(*There is another pause*—VIC *yawns violently and rises with effort. She looks at* BOTES—*then at* CYRIL.)

VIC. O mercy! are you going to smoke? I've got a splitting headache.

(CYRIL *looks at her, yawns again, and with the air of a martyr puts away the cigarette. As he slams the case the noise awakens* BOTES.)

CYRIL. (*To* VIC.) Selfish. (*To* BOTES.) I say, old chap, do you mind pushing the bell, it's nearer you.

BOTES. Yes, I *do* mind.

CYRIL. Vic, then, you push it—you're up.

VIC. Yes, but I'm on this side of the room.

(CYRIL *with difficulty rises, and rings the bell.*)

(*Enter* HALLEN.)

HALLEN. Excuse me, sir—your cab is ready.

BOTES. Very good!

CYRIL. Hallen, fix me a bromo seltzer in the dining room and be quick.

HALLEN. Yes, sir.

BOTES. Fix two.

HALLEN. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

CYRIL. Lovely party! (*There is a pause—all look crossly at him.*) Let's give another soon.

VIC. Oh! Lord!

BOTES. Cyril!

CYRIL. Yes.

BOTES. Cyril.

CYRIL. I answered you.

VIC. He answered you.

BOTES. Cyril, don't you want to go to the bank for me?

CYRIL. What for?

BOTES. To stop payment on a cheque I've been foolish enough to give this morning.

CYRIL. You'd better go yourself, old boy, and learn a good lesson. (BOTES, *angry, looks at* CYRIL.) Good Lord, if you're going to be one of those cheque-givers in your old age Vic and I might as well throw up the game at once.

BOTES. You won't go?

CYRIL. (*Angry.*) No! Governor, I'm not going to spoil you. You want to age before your time.

BOTES. Humph! Cheek!

(*Enter* JO, *buoyant, gay and happy, she almost dances into the room and almost sings when she speaks.*)

JO. Good morning, everybody! Is n't it a *lovely, lovely* morning!

(*There are loud, bare exclamations from all.*)

VIC. Mercy!

BOTES. Lord!

CYRIL. Is it!

(*They all look up at her glumly and gaze in astonished silence.*)

JO. Why! What's the matter?

VIC. My dear, we're all dead tired, and your spirits simply stagger us.

CYRIL. Not a blessed one of us has slept a wink.

JO. Nor have I.

VIC. O, my dear, did you toss about all night too?

JO. No, I think I sang straight through the whole night! softly, of course, to myself.

BOTES. (*Rising.*) Excuse me.

VIC. With pleasure.

(BOTES *gives her a look as he leaves the stage.*)

CYRIL. That's exactly how I feel, except that I've got a motor car inside my head. Now I've got to smoke!

VIC. Of course, Cyril, *we* are n't in love!

JO. (*To* VIC.) Have you a headache, dear?

VIC. I did have, but your happiness is curing it already.

JO. I love you, Vic!

VIC. O, do you!

JO. Yes! You're a perfect old darling! I think Cyril's pretty nice too. Cyril, I've never kissed you, but I think I will this morning. I feel fond of everybody!

CYRIL. No, you don't—no, you don't—I'm not up to kissing women this morning.

JO. You impertinent rascal! as if I were in earnest! *When* I kiss you, you'll know it.

CYRIL. Hope so.

JO. If your father had given me half a chance I'd have kissed *him* this morning.

CYRIL. If you'd kissed the Governor this morning he'd have bit!

JO. And are n't you going to congratulate me?

CYRIL. I did this morning after the party, about six—before I went to bed—but you were sort of dotty and did n't know what was going on.

JO. Well, both of you congratulate me all

over again. I want to be sure I didn't dream it.

VIC. (*Rising and going to* JO—*hugs her.*) With all my heart!

JO. You darling! I really do love you awfully, Vic!

CYRIL. Well, I congratulate *him*. There! There's a pretty speech for you!

JO. O! If you think that's a "pretty speech" you ought to hear one of his! And now, haven't you an engagement, Cyril?

CYRIL. No.

JO. Not even with Countess Casavetti?

CYRIL. No, it's too early for her. Her theory is it's the early worm that gets caught by the bird!

JO. Well, pretend you have an engagement and go out anyway! Won't you?

CYRIL. No, I'm hanged if I will. (*Yawns.*) Why?

JO. Because! I want you to let me have this room to myself, like a duck! Please do!

CYRIL. Why don't you take the whole house! Last night you monopolized the Spooners' Corner!

VIC. And I understand, didn't forget the electric button!

JO. Shh! (*To* CYRIL.) Please, Cyril—he's coming to see me in a few minutes.

CYRIL. Who?

JO. *He!*

CYRIL. Oh! My homage to your Royal Highness—and I have an engagement I've just remembered with a bromo seltzer.

VIC. I'll go too!

JO. No, not yet, he's not coming for half an hour. I want to talk to you alone. Do you mind?

VIC. Of course I don't.

JO. Vic! He's just sent me a message!

VIC. Where is it?

JO. I won't tell. But he says he's coming this morning to tell me a plan for our marriage.

VIC. I wonder what it'll be?

JO. I don't know, but I trust him, and I've cabled father before the servants were really awake. He must know by now. I finished with, "Jo's love on the Happiest Day of Her Life!" Dear father! And O! Vic— (*Running to her, hugging her again.*) *I'm very fond of you!* (*She kneels by* VIC.)

VIC. O, Jo! (*Laughing.*)

JO. But there's one I'm more fond of, look. (*Goes to conservatory door up at the right, pointing off into it.*) Dear room—(*Throwing in a kiss.*) You know what happened when you all found us in the dark! We had pushed the electric button and when we heard you coming we tried to push the button back, and it wouldn't budge! (*Both laugh.*)

VIC. Cyril knew you and Prince Adolf were in there, and he slipped the connection from the hall.

(*Enter* HALLEN.)

JO. (*Laughing.*) He ought to be spanked!

HALLEN. The mail, miss. I brought 'em at once, seeing as you seemed so anxious.

VIC. No, I wasn't anxious, Hallen—I was cross—

JO. Good morning, Hallen. Isn't it a lovely morning?

HALLEN. Yes, miss.

JO. And wasn't it a beautiful party last night?

HALLEN. Yes, miss.

JO. Wait, Hallen—I want to give you something—oh dear, I haven't got my purse— Lend me something, Vic. Give me a pound.

VIC. I haven't got it, my dear—I have nothing but a five pound note.

JO. Well, give me that. (*Gives it to* HALLEN.) Hallen, there's a little something for you.

HALLEN. What for, miss?

JO. You've been so kind during our long visit, and you can keep the change.

HALLEN. Thank you, miss. This will come in very 'andy, now, miss.

JO. Will it, Hallen, why?

HALLEN. To buy a baby carriage with, miss.

VIC. You extravagant creature! What in the world—

JO. Now, my dearest Vic, don't question me why I do anything today, come along! What do you call that?

VIC. What?

JO. (*Pointing to the window.*) That!

VIC. A window! I call it a window!

JO. I thought you would! Well, I don't. I call it a picture-frame, because all I see in it is—

VIC. (*Laughing.*) Really? All *I* see is out of doors.

JO. You have my sympathy. I suppose you call that a mirror and see yourself in it.

VIC. Exactly.

JO. That only shows how vain you are. Another picture frame. I look in it and

see nobody but him again. And what do you call that?

(VIC *looks at the door;* JO *brings her down the center and points to the door at the left.*)

VIC. Another picture frame, I suppose!

JO. Not at all, that 's a door, thank goodness, because it will open soon and he 'll come in. (*Taking the arm chair from the left, she faces it against wall at left.*) And now, watch! I 'm going to arrange the room.

VIC. Why? What 's the matter with the room?

JO. There 's a great deal the matter with it for an engaged couple. For one thing, it 's far too light. I wish Cyril had the sun on an electric button too. (VIC *gets off the table.*) Excuse me, darling,—(JO *pulls the table up to mantel—* VIC *sits on the chair in the center.* JO *comes to the arm chair in the center.*) Get up! This will be my chair, so!

VIC. Jo, I 'm so tired.

JO. O, no! (*She turns the chair around —*VIC *sits on the sofa.*) After all, the sofa 'll be better. Come on, help me with the sofa.

VIC. (*Laughing, helps her—they move sofa so that it faces the center.*) My dear, you 're tearing the whole room to pieces—father 'll be furious, you know what an old maid he is.

JO. I can't help that! That is to keep me from being an old maid. Now—(*She moves the arm chair so that it faces the mantel.*) I want to arrange it so that we 'll have to sit on the sofa.

VIC. (*Mischievously.*) Why? (*A pause.*) Why?

JO. Well, when you 're engaged, you 'll know why, and meanwhile, you can guess. (*She turns the arm chair to the wall.*) Chairs are very unsociable things when you 're engaged. There!

(*The chairs are all away to one side against the wall. Only the sofa is conveniently placed and it is quite by itself.*)

VIC. (*Amused, looking around.*) I don't think the room looks very well.

JO. As the Duchess said—"Handsome is as handsome does"—(*As she does so,* JO *pulls cushion away and puts it at the end of couch.*) And this does very well *for us,* thank you. (*She arranges the cushions at one end.*) O, my dear! What an awfully big sofa! This sofa I should call after instead of before! This is the kind you would have around your silver wedding, for a *family reunion!* Goodness, it 's so long! Wait a minute. More pillows!

(VIC *turns and watches her; she gets cushions from the settee.* VIC *laughs.*)

VIC. They don't *match!*

JO. Who cares! He and I do! That 's all that 's necessary. (*She places the pillows so they occupy at least one half of the sofa, leaving a very small place for them to sit down.*) There! How 's that?

VIC. (*As if crushed in seat.*) The most uncomfortable seat I was ever in in my life! You can't breathe.

JO. My dear, who wants to breathe? You don't think about breathing.—Of course, it is rather crowdy now, it *does* make a difference whom you share it with.

VIC. Why don't you sit on his lap and be done with it?

JO. Don't be vulgar! Although I 'm not so sure I should mind that so awfully.

VIC. (*Laughing.*) Well, I suppose such a thing has been done, even by a lady!

JO. O, I know you think I 've lost my mind, but I have n't. It 's only my heart I 've lost, Vic, only my heart! And I don't want to find it. You darling, I don't want to find it!

VIC. (*Pats her on the back.*) O, Jo.

HALLEN. 'Er Royal 'Ighness, the Duchess of Hohen'etstein.

(*They rise as the* DUCHESS *comes forward.*)

VIC. Jo.

JO. Oh, Vic.

DUCHESS. I peg your pardons dat I come so unannounced—And I vas afraid too *early!* I see der servants have not yet made time for to re-arrange der rooms. (JO *turns to* VIC *and they laugh.*) Eggscuse me!

(*Both the girls are confused.*)

VIC. We are glad to see you, ma'am, at any hour.

DUCHESS. I haf asked for Mrs. Sheldon, but vas informed dat she vas out and ven my visit vas of der greatest importance and I haf put behind mein departure from London to come and ven it most concerns also Miss Sheldon—I haf thought it better to see her, widout Mrs. Sheldon.

JO. Yes, ma'am.

VIC. Then, if you will excuse me, ma'am—
(*Exit.*)

DUCHESS. As you please.

JO. Thank you.

DUCHESS. Please all sit down. This is a dreadful pusiness. Ah, Ach! (*Sighs.*) Adolf loaf you so much.

JO. (*Quietly.*) I am very happy and very proud of that, madame. He loves me, I am sure, no more than I love him.

DUCHESS. We haf talked many hours, him and me, and we haf both said peautiful things about loaf, and we haf three times sent dispatches at his fader—and *now*—I bring you goot news.

JO. (*Rising, relieved.*) O! Thank you! —Thank you!—Thank you!

DUCHESS. Yah! Adolf haf won me ofer to his side! Vere loaf vas in it, I vas always *weak*. I vas in loaf meinself once. Himmel, vith such a angel! Peautiful like a imache! He vas a sentry outside our palace; plue eyes, one vas a leedle squinty but I liked dat! We haf neffer spoke—aber—perhaps I haf told you dis pefore?

JO. Yes, but I am glad to hear you tell it now. Your love will make you kind to me.

DUCHESS. Yah, for dat I haf my bruder told all possible, and mine last dispatch at him dis morning haf cost me one pound two shilling. And my bruder is goot—he haf give way. He is consented—

JO. (*Overjoyed.*) To our marriage! Of course, I knew he would!

DUCHESS. Yah! His Majesty will agree, tanks for his kind heart, to a morganatic marriage.

JO. (*Rising.*) No! No! No! No!

DUCHESS. *No?*

JO. You mean for me to share Adolf with some other woman? Be half his wife, and half his mistress?

DUCHESS. O, you must not put dat so! Der morganatic wife of der late King Humbert of Italy, she haf been very happy. Queen Margaret nefer haf interfered with her in no way. She haf had her own palace, and haf lived her own life.

JO. No, no—never such a marriage for me! My home to be only half my husband's? His home all some other woman's? This woman who will share his life's work with him, and her children will be his heirs.

DUCHESS. You 'll be made a countess—

JO. I don't care about that.

DUCHESS. (*Continues.*) Your children will bear titles—

JO. It is n't that, Madame! You don't understand. I come from a different country where we give all, when we love, and demand all back. I would n't shame my country, I would n't shame my father! I would n't shame myself by accepting what you offer me.

DUCHESS. We German wives do much more dan dat for our husbands.

JO. Yes, but your wives are their husbands' servants, we women at my home are our husbands' *friends*, we share everything with them—the happiness and sorrow, and even their work sometimes. At home we stand hand in hand, equal, the man and the woman—and that is the pride and joy of our lives.

DUCHESS. But you cannot be Queen, my dear girl—no woman can who is not of royal blood, and it vas not only in our family—it vas so in all royal families in all the countries, dat is for why the morganatic marriage—

JO. No, no—don't talk to me any more about it. Excuse me, but I won't listen. I know you don't realize how I feel, I know you can't realize what marriage means to me—

DUCHESS. What did you expect?

JO. I don't know—only I know I loved him, and I know he loved me, and I trusted him, and I do still. I have no desire to be a Queen! If I could love him more than I do, it would be if he were n't a prince, but nobody—like me! Then we could be happy nobodies together!

DUCHESS. But you vas forgetting he vill be King some day.

JO. (*Sits on left end of couch.*) Must he reign? He has a brother! Suppose he wished to give it up? all up?

DUCHESS. (*Breathless.*) What! You vould ask of him to give up the crown? To make dat sacrifice?

JO. Oh no, not if it 's a sacrifice. It 's only if he should prefer my love.

DUCHESS. It is n't possible for Adolf to give up the throne—for dat his fader would *nefer* consent.

JO. Is n't Adolf his own master? Any boy of twenty-one at home—

DUCHESS. You cannot bring your American customs into our old countries, Miss Sheldon, and the sooner you got that idea out from your head, it vas better! The

family of der Hohenhetstein must all obey der king who is deir head—

Jo. If I can't share alone Prince Adolf's life, then even if it breaks my heart, your Royal Highness, *I* can't help it—he must make his choice.

Duchess. Aber, dere is no choice, I haf now come to offer you de great honor of dis marriage as I haf said.

Jo. What you call an honor, I call an insult.

Duchess. (*Rising.*) Parding!

Jo. Forgive me, but my life's happiness is at stake, and I must tell the truth. I could n't bear it, Madame—if it were n't that you come from the King, not from Prince Adolf.

Duchess. I come from *bose.*

Jo. (*With a cry from her throat.*) No.

Duchess. Eggscoose.

Jo. Forgive me—but—

Duchess. I come from His Majesty *and* Prince Adolf.

Jo. No. I can't believe this is the plan Prince Adolf wrote me of this morning.

Duchess. So!

Jo. This is his plan, you tell me?

Duchess. It is.

Jo. (*Stronger.*) Then, Madame, I don't wonder Prince Adolf sent you rather than come himself.

Duchess. So.

Jo. Yes. Because I tell you again that what you offer me insults me.

Duchess. Insults you?

Jo (*In angry tears.*) Yes, Madame. Please tell him what I say. So that at least I need n't say it all again to him. Excuse me.

(*She curtseys in front of the* Duchess *and leaves the stage crying.*)

Duchess. (*Watching her off.*) Ach! Gott! Even in tears she vas just so peautiful as efer! When I weep I vas nefer peautiful, I always haf to blow my nose.

(Hallen, *entering.*)

Hallen. 'Is Royal 'Ighness.

Duchess. Mr. Botes? Was he in der house, yet?

Hallen. No, your Royal 'Ighness.

Duchess. When he was in, please say I would see him.

(*The* Prince *enters.* Hallen *bows.*)

Prince. (*Eagerly.*) Well, well?

(*The* Duchess *motions to* Hallen *to leave.*)

Prince. Well—

Duchess. Ach. My poor boy.

Prince. What?

Duchess. Refuses.

Prince. Refuses?

Duchess. Yah. It is wonderful.

Prince. Aber.

Duchess. (*In resentful surprise.*) And mit anger.

Prince. Anger?

Duchess. Yah. Anger at me,—and excooses.

Prince. For why?

Duchess. Dat I can't made oud. It vas all talk aboud American women and laws, and such. I don't suppose dey can haf such marriages in America and she don't understand.

Prince. Haf you explained mit her we would be married bose by der Church and by der Law also?

Duchess. She haf n't listened. She talk about her own laws.

Prince. But haf you tell her about King Humbert and about Arch Duke Ferdinand of Austria and the Countess Chokk?

Duchess. She say dat make no difference.

Prince. O, dat is sure. She haf the wrong idea. (*Crossing to the bell.*) She haf got the wrong idea. I vill see her meinself. It vas sure she don't understand.—How it vas different vith mein country and her country. Perhaps she don't know how she vill be really mein missus, mein truly wife. No matter vich vas mein Queen. And by Gott! when she was not possible to be Queen in Eastphalia, I vill have me no Queen when I vas King.

Duchess. Your fader, he vill have something to say to dat; you must make a Queen for der country.

(*Enter* Hallen.)

Prince. Please, I will see Miss Sheldon. (Hallen *bows and leaves.*) Yah. When she see how I loaf her and dat I will nefer loaf any but she—nobody all my life but she, she will consent, not? If she like, I vill go me to New York and be married, or in Chikygo, or anywhere in a church or hotel. Only as she vill be my wife.

Duchess. (*Speaking in German.*) Don't you see her before me—go into the conservatory, and I will send her in to you.

Prince. (*Speaking in German.*) Yes, that will be better. O, my dear Aunt, I

love her. (*Kissing her on each cheek.*) I love her better than all the world—she must be my wife.

DUCHESS. (*Hearing* JO *coming.*) Pst.

(*She motions him off and he leaves. There is a moment's pause and then* JO *enters from the left slowly, very serious and dignified.*)

JO. (*She stops, resenting what she thinks is a trick.*) Hallen told me his Royal Highness wished to see me.

DUCHESS. Dat vas right. He vas in the conservatory.

(JO *slowly goes toward it; as she reaches the center of the stage the* DUCHESS *speaks again and* JO *stops.*)

DUCHESS. He says you don't haf understand me.

JO. (*Hopefully.*) Yes?

DUCHESS. Yes. He says it was not what you haf think.

JO. (*Her face and manner lighting up.*) I knew it! I knew it!

DUCHESS. He vill himself make you understand.

(*Motions her to go.* JO, *with a total change of manner, walk, bearing, hurries, almost runs, to the door of the conservatory and off the stage, but is seen to close the door meaningly and smile through the glass to the* DUCHESS. *As the* DUCHESS *apparently listens,* BOTES *enters.*)

BOTES. (*Apologizing.*) I am so sorry—

DUCHESS. Ssh! (*Her finger on her lips.*) They are in dere. (*Pointing.*)

BOTES. (*Whispers back.*) Who?

DUCHESS. Die two turtle doves.

(*Chuckling.*)

BOTES. Oh. Miss Sheldon and—

DUCHESS. Yah. His Majesty is agreed to a morganatic marriage.

BOTES. (*Delighted on his own account.*) Good.

DUCHESS. But she haf refused dat.

BOTES. (*Forgetting himself.*) Refused him! But she can't! She's bound herself to marry the Prince.

DUCHESS. So?

BOTES. I will make her accept Prince Adolf, ma'am, and assure you I can do it.

DUCHESS. (*Rising and speaking impressively.*) Mr. Botes.

BOTES. Yes, Madame?

DUCHESS. Don't do dat. It will pe one real blessing if she refuse him. I tink she haf peculiar American ideas about tings, as shall not pe good for Adolf. So if he shall not inflooence her now yet to accept him, it vas best all around dat he gif her up.

BOTES. (*Moving to the right as if eagerly listening.*) But she will never let him go. (The DUCHESS *turns.*) I know she intends to marry the Crown Prince. (*The* DUCHESS *sits on the couch, motioning him to sit down also.*) Thank you. (*He sits beside her on the couch.*) And of course she understands she can only do so morganatically. Her mother told me as much. She cabled her father this morning she was going to marry the Crown Prince.

(*The* PRINCE *enters slowly, bows back through the open doorway, closes the door and comes forward.* BOTES *rises.*)

BOTES. Your Royal Highness—

PRINCE. She haf refused me also.

DUCHESS. For why?

PRINCE. She say she haf told you, and it vas for you already to make it not necessary for her to say de same ting ofer again to me.

DUCHESS. She haf explain to you too dat you insult—

PRINCE. (*With his teeth set, and evidently going over the scene in mind.*) Yah.

DUCHESS. (*Angry.*) She haf said alles dat she haf said to me?

PRINCE. I tink she haf said alles and more also.

DUCHESS. (*Angry.*) She haf no right.

PRINCE. Pardon, meine liebe Tante, she haf all der right.

DUCHESS. What haf you answered?

PRINCE. Nuttings.

DUCHESS. (*Astounded.*) Nuttings?

PRINCE. Yah. (*He turns to the* DUCHESS.) Because all dat she haf said was damn true.

DUCHESS. Adolf!

PRINCE. Yah. I offer to her anything, except but everything. Alles or nuttings. Aunt Caroline, I vas ashamed for meinself.

DUCHESS. But it vas not your fault, mein dear boy. You cannot help dat you vas der Crown Prince and she vas nobody.

PRINCE. Now also ven it vas too late, I see me. I could refuse to be King.

DUCHESS. Adolf!

PRINCE. What is dat to me widout her? Nuttings.

DUCHESS. Nefer. Your fader and your country vill not permit dat.

PRINCE. I loaf mein fader and mein country, but I loaf her more. She tink I haf insulted her. She say she loaf me not no more. I haf insult her. Do you know vat is the truth, Aunt Caroline?

DUCHESS. Vas?

PRINCE. I loaf her more dat she haf refused me now what I haf offered her. Efen mit all mein stupidness I can know now how I shall haf tought less of her, efen withought knowing dat, when she haf said yes to me just now.

DUCHESS. You tink dat because you are in loaf, aber—

PRINCE. Kein Aber. I shall better haf give up mein crown and mein fader, throne and alles. Alles. Tonder blazes!

DUCHESS. (*Rising.*) Adolf! Mein Gott!

BOTES. The attractions of your title, sir.

PRINCE. You tink dat? I don't. I haf lesson what is worth more den alles to me one million times double. I hate de whole King pusiness for dat it haf come between she and me, and before I get through mit him yet I will kick him alles out. Egscoose me. (*Exit.*)

(*The* DUCHESS *and* BOTES *look at each other a moment.*)

DUCHESS. O, this vas dreadful, Botes, yah!

BOTES. Yah!

DUCHESS. And he shall be able to do it, also.

BOTES. Yah! Yah!

DUCHESS. He was always too republican. He haf made such trouble for dat mit his fader, mit his all too free notions. You haf said, Mr. Botes, you haf influence mit her. You tink you can persuade her to the morganatic marriage?

BOTES. I feel *sure* I can.

DUCHESS. (*Goes to him.*) Mr. Botes, you do dat, and I gif you my word anything you vould ask, possible, my bruder shall do for you.

BOTES. King George, ma'am, could, if he would, satisfy the chief ambition of my life.

DUCHESS. So? What is dat. (*As* BOTES *hesitates.*) Speak out! Speak out!

BOTES. I want a Barony, ma'am, not only for myself, but for my son's sake.

DUCHESS. Goot! You haf done much already for Eastphalia. I can safely gif you my promise—if you will bring about dis marriage as we want it.

BOTES Yes?

DUCHESS. Der honor what you want will come yours!

BOTES. I will see Miss Sheldon at once.

DUCHESS. I go immediate—Gott in Himmel, Mr. Botes, dis loaf! It makes indigestion of all our senses. I know by mein own experience, and you too, not?

BOTES. (*She takes his arm, humorously.*) Me too, ma'am; I've suffered something dreadful!

DUCHESS. (*Laughs.*) I thought so. Thank Gott we are not any more so young as mein nephew was. That *would* be dreadful. (*They exeunt.*)

(*The moment the room is empty,* JO'S *face is seen stealing a look through the glass doors. She enters. There are traces of tears and real suffering on her face. She also seems to be thinking deeply. As she sits down,* VIC *enters quickly with an eager, happy curiosity.*)

VIC. I heard him go downstairs! Well, Jo! (*She stops on seeing* JO'S *expression.*) O, my dear old girl—did she tell the truth after all?

JO. Yes. O, Vic! (*She bursts into tears and sobs through the following speech.*) I'm so unhappy! Why did he make me own I loved him! Why did you let me love him? I knew in the beginning it was impossible, but somehow after I lost my heart I lost my head! I'm so unhappy—O, Vic!

VIC. Dear old Jo! I'm so sorry. Did you tell him what you told his aunt?

JO. Yes. Every word.

VIC. And what did he say?

JO. Nothing. He just looked at me without speaking. I wanted him to speak—to take back what he said or say something else—anything else—I don't know what—only I wanted to make him speak. So I said "Goodbye." Still he did n't answer. And then I told him I did n't love him any longer. And I meant it then—at least I thought I did—and still he did n't speak—but just bowed and left me.

VIC. The brute!

JO. No! It 's I've been a fool. What did I expect? Only, Vic. O, Vic—I let myself go. And now, even while I feel insulted at what he 's asked me, I love him. I love him still, Vic. Can't you shame me out of it?

VIC. Dear old girl. I'm so sorry.

JO. Only what 'll I do, Vic? Vic? What 'll I do? And only this morning

I cabled my father and said it was the happiest day of my life.

VIC. (*Angry.*) Jo, you must try and realize Prince Adolf really *could n't* love you as he should or he would n't offer you the sort of thing he did.

JO. (*Her pride coming to her rescue, begins to recover a little.*) Yes, that 's true, that 's true, is n't it? How dared he? How dared he? How could he? Say that to me again, Vic. Make me believe it! Keep on telling me!

VIC. You would be pointed at always.

JO. Yes, I know. I ought to hate him, hate him! Why don't I? Why can't we choose whom we shall love and whom we shall hate! Life would be so much easier. I will never see him again, anyway. Never. Not unless he begs me to. And I 'll never listen to one word of love from him again so long as I live. Unless—he asks my pardon and owns his way is wrong. O, I 'm a fool with all these unlesses—the thing is finished! It must be!

VIC. I wish I could help you, dear.

JO. You 're so good to me, Vic. (*Rising.*) But I 'm going home to my father. His girl Jo is homesick for her father. You understand, don't you, dear? I want to go home.

(*Enter* BOTES.)

BOTES. (*Angrily.*) Well, I must say.

VIC. Yes, father.

JO. Yes, Mr. Botes.

BOTES. Well, Miss Jo! You 've made a nice mess of things.

JO. What?

BOTES. What the devil do you mean?

VIC and JO. (*Together.*) I don't understand you!

BOTES. Don't understand me?

JO. No. What do I mean by what?

BOTES. Why, refusing Prince Adolf or pretending to—

JO. "Pretending to"!

BOTES. Yes, after all the manœuvering to get him?

VIC. Father, you must n't say that.

JO. Mr. Botes.

BOTES. Vic, you 've been taken in by your friend here. Miss Jo got him where she wanted him, up to his eyes in love with her.

JO. That is—not true!

VIC. Of course it 's not!

BOTES. Bah! Then she worked on my fool ambition, holding in my face her marriage, mind you, to get £40,000 out of me! And now she wants to turn around and pretend she won't have the Prince at his price! What 's the game?

JO. Vic, do you know what your father means?

BOTES. I mean the whole business looks to me like a pretty cunning scheme to get £40,000 for nothing! But I 'm a little of a tartar myself, when it comes to scheming. Are you in earnest in refusing the Prince?

JO. I am.

BOTES. And what about my £40,000?

VIC. Father, you 're behaving brutally. What are you complaining of? Has the Prince borrowed money of you?

BOTES. No, the Prince has n't. (*To* JO.) What about the agreement you signed?

JO. What agreement?

BOTES. You 'll marry the Prince, or you 'll never get a penny of that £40,000 in spite of my cheque! I 've attended to that this morning.

JO. *What* cheque?

BOTES. And have you forgotten the note you gave me last evening?

VIC. What note?

JO. I don't know what was in that note!

BOTES. (*Very satirically.*) Really! Then you did n't sign it, I suppose?

JO. No!

BOTES. No! O, come, Miss Jo! Vic 's going to know the whole truth from me sooner or later, so you may as well be frank now. (MRS. SHELDON *opens the door and enters.*) Either you marry the Prince and carry out your agreement, or else—

JO. What agreement, Mr. Botes? Mother Lena!

BOTES. Perhaps Mrs. Sheldon may persuade you to be frank when she knows the alternative.

MRS. S. What are you telling Jo, Mr. Botes?

BOTES. First let me tell *you* that Miss Jo has refused Prince Adolf!

MRS. S. Jo! That can't be true!

JO. The marriage is impossible.

BOTES. And what about my money?

MRS. S. That is a private matter, Mr. Botes.

BOTES. Not any longer it is n't! It 's going to be as public as I can make it.

JO. Mother Lena, what does he mean about his money? What does it all mean?

BOTES. It means just what I said—that

you are a couple of swindlers. (*Turning to* VIC.) That's what it means, Vic.

VIC. Father!

JO. What do you mean?

MRS. S. How dare you?

BOTES. Your friend and her mother entered into an agreement with me that on Miss Jo's marriage with Prince Adolf—I was to get a Barony in exchange for—

JO. Mother Lena!

MRS. S. You gave me your word to keep this private between you and me!

JO. Keep what? Keep what between you two?

BOTES. And I kept it private till she broke her word with me.

JO. What word?

BOTES. Your word to marry Prince Adolf!

MRS. S. Mr. Botes!

JO. I never gave you any such word!

BOTES. No, of course! You didn't give me anything last night!

MRS. S. Mr. Botes!

JO. I told you I didn't know what was in that envelope. Mrs. Sheldon gave it to me to—

MRS. S. Mr. Botes, if you will leave me alone with Jo—

BOTES. And you said you didn't sign it, either!

MRS. S. Jo, don't answer!

JO. No, I did not sign it.

VIC. Jo's told you already, Father—

BOTES. How is that, Mrs. Sheldon?

MRS. S. I must ask you either to leave me alone with Jo, or else she and I will leave you!

JO. No, I won't leave this room till I've found out something of what all this means.

BOTES. Excuse me. This all can end right here if Miss Jo will say that she has reconsidered and will marry Prince Adolf as he wishes! (*Pause.*)

MRS. S. Say it, Jo, for God's sake, say it!

JO. No!

BOTES. Then let me tell you both that I've been to my bank since I gave Mrs. Sheldon that cheque and I've stopped payment on it.

MRS. S. (*Beside herself.*) What! You cheat!! You—

JO. (*Seizing her arm and speaking very sternly.*) Mother Lena, what does this mean? Tell me the truth!

MRS. S. (*Looking at her with an appealing gaze and trying to give her a hint.*) Tell him that you signed the agreement and that you'll stand by it.

JO. No! You know I didn't!

MRS. S. (*Turning to* BOTES.) Mr. Botes, leave us alone, please—she doesn't want to speak the truth before your daughter!

VIC. Jo!

JO. (*Shaking her head slowly and then turning to* BOTES.) Mr. Botes, will you please leave me alone with Mrs. Sheldon for a few minutes?

VIC. (*Quickly and earnestly.*) Yes, father, you must. I ask it too.

BOTES. (*After a moment's hesitation.*) Very well. My daughter and I will wait in the other room. The whole matter was your own plan; and now it's started, you've both got to see it through. If you want that cheque of mine made good, Miss Jo marries the Prince. (*Going to conservatory on the right.*) Vic, I'll show you this.

(VIC *goes to* BOTES *and he shows her the agreement which he takes from his pocket.*)

VIC. What?

BOTES. The paper Miss Jo gave me—then things will be clearer to you.

(*Exeunt* VIC *and* BOTES.)

JO. Now quickly, what does all this mean? What have you done?

MRS. S. I am in desperate straits for money—and a Mr. Wilton came over here to save me—to save us—all, from a terrible scandal.

JO. Scandal!

MRS. S. To get $250,000 from me.

JO. Why, why?

MRS. S. (*Ignoring her question.*) I saw how things were drifting between you and Prince Adolf, and in desperation I made this plan! I managed to wheedle £40,000 out of Mr. Botes on the strength of a barony which you are to get for him on your marriage to Prince Adolf. You know that would be the easiest thing in the world for you.

JO. It's hard for me to follow you. I can't realize. I still don't understand.

MRS. S. You will marry him, won't you, Jo?

JO. But why do you need such a sum of money?

MRS. S. We haven't time to discuss that now. You will marry him, Jo?

JO. And that paper—what was it?

MRS. S. An agreement between you and Mr. Botes. I signed your name to it.

JO. (*Outraged—rising.*) You dared!

MRS. S. Jo! You'll say you signed it, won't you?

JO. No!

MRS. S. But you'll marry Prince Adolf, won't you?

JO. No! No! You've made it more impossible than ever.

MRS. S. But say you'll marry him, just say so—till we get this money safe in the hands of the bank at home.

JO. (*Looking at her in horror.*) No! No!

MRS. S. (*Her fear and excitement mounting.*) But if payment on Mr. Botes' cheque is stopped, I'll go—to prison.

JO. (*Horror-struck, breaks away from* MRS. S.) What more have you done?

MRS. S. Never mind—I tell you I'll go to prison!

JO. (*Pause, looking at her quietly.*) Well?—

MRS. S. Jo! (*She insinuates determinedly.*) I won't go alone!

JO. (*Looking at her after a moment, startled.*) What do you mean?

MRS. S. Your father will go with me.

JO. No! No!

MRS. S. You must say that signature is yours, and carry out this agreement.

JO. No, no, I can't, less than ever now, I tell you! There must be some way at home to get this money?

MRS. S. Do you think I've not tried every way? I owe money everywhere. At a breath of trouble, we'll be swamped here by a score of people I'm in debt to.

JO. You don't deserve to be helped.

MRS. S. O, I know you would n't do it for me. But for your father.

JO. He is n't responsible in any way for what you've done.

MRS. S. I've borrowed money illegally, and as much in his name as my own. It was easy enough for me to get your father to sign any paper I asked him to. He always took my word for what the paper was.

JO. Yes, he had faith in you. He loved you. Poor father!

MRS. S. He can't escape being punished, if you don't do as I say.

JO. No, no, I can't believe that!

MRS. S. You will believe it! When it's too late to help! Will you let him go to prison? (JO *simply stares at her. There is a pause.*) He will go! But I have my chance, and I'll take it!

JO. What do you mean?

MRS. S. Your father is there, they can arrest him any minute, but I'm over here and if you let the crash come, before they can get the papers, *I'll* be out of reach in *Belgium,* where there's no extradition treaty.

JO. You've even looked that up!

MRS. S. Yes!

JO. Oh! But my instinct was right that kept me from loving you. You came into our lives when my father and I were the happiest couple in the world! Why did you come, why? Why! Of course, I know, to shield yourself behind my father's reputation, to trade on his love! To make him a cat's paw—to sacrifice him, body and soul, if necessary, to save your mean, contemptible self! You ought to crawl and beg at my father's feet for a crumb of forgiveness which you don't deserve to get. You traitor—to everything and everybody!

MRS. S. What are you going to do?

JO. (*Very quietly.*) Of course I'm going to save my father.

MRS. S. (*Excited and eager—bending over the couch.*) How?

(*There is a long pause while* JO *stares straight ahead of her.*)

MRS. S. *How?*

JO. By any sacrifice that's necessary.

MRS. S. Jo! You'll do it?

JO. (*Rising and drawing away in disgust and almost fear of her.*) Don't! Don't! (*Calls.*) Mr. Botes!

(BOTES *and* VICTORIA *enter.*)

JO. Mr. Botes?

BOTES. Yes.

JO. It is true you have stopped payment on the cheque you gave Mrs. Sheldon?

BOTES. It is.

JO. And is there no other way to persuade you to let us have that money, than the way you told us of just now? (*He shakes his head.*) If I will go into any sort of service I can get, governess, companion, secretary, into a shop, anything—and every cent outside my bare living you shall get!

VIC. Jo!

BOTES. No!

VIC. Father!

BOTES. No!

JO. Well, I accept.

BOTES. (*Taking out a paper.*) Acknowledge to my daughter you gave me this paper, and give her your word you'll stand by it.

JO. Give it to me.

(*She reads the paper.*)

VIC. (*Going to* JO *and putting her hand on* JO'S *shoulder.*) You can't do it, Jo! You know you can't!

JO. (*To* VIC.) Yes, I can. (*Then turning to* BOTES.) I signed this—and gave it to you, and I'll stand by it.

(VIC *takes the paper—reads it.*)

BOTES. Good! Write a note to Prince Adolf asking him to call this afternoon, that you have reconsidered.

JO. Yes, but first you must give your word of honor to your daughter that you will make your cheque good today.

BOTES. Certainly.

VIC. Father!

BOTES. I give you my word, Vic, to make good today the cheque I gave Mrs. Sheldon. (JO *sits and writes.* BOTES *and* VIC *speak in lowered tones aside.*) What do you think of your friend now, Vic?

VIC. She did n't sign that paper!

BOTES. What do you mean?

VIC. It 's all written in her mother's hand; Jo *did n't sign it.*

BOTES. Well, she 's going to live up to it. That 's all that 's really necessary.

VIC. I could n't tell you, father, how shamefully I think you 're behaving. Let them have the money.

BOTES. What! And let the whole thing go just as I 've got what I want in my grasp! You talk like a—well—like a woman, Vic. Ask Cyril what *he* says.

VIC. It 's shameful! That 's all—shameful. Jo!

BOTES. (*To* JO.) What have you written? No more tricks!

JO. (*Handing the paper to* VIC.) Read it aloud.

VIC. (*Reading.*) Come this afternoon at five—if you still want me—I will be the sort of wife you wish. Josephine Sheldon.

(VIC *gives the note to* BOTES *with a look of contempt.*)

BOTES. That 's something like it, and there 's no going back on that, eh?

JO. No!

BOTES. It 's good business all around. He gets what he wants, you get what you want, and I get what I want, and all 's well that ends well.

JO. Wait one minute, Mr. Botes.

BOTES. Yes.

JO. Suppose Prince Adolf should alter his mind and not want me now, even at his own price!

BOTES. Humph! I'll risk that!

JO. You see I 'm not willing for him to marry me blindfolded. When he comes this afternoon I intend to tell him all the truth!

BOTES. (*Turning to her.*) What!

JO. I intend to tell him *why* I 've changed my mind! Tell him of our agreement; tell him for just how much he 's buying me, and then, if he still wants the bargain, I 'm his.

BOTES. That 's against the whole spirit of the agreement!

JO. But it 's within the letter of it.

BOTES. Even then there 's nothing legally binding in the letter of it.

JO. Yes, but I 've made it with "Word of Honor Botes"!

BOTES. It 's a damn trick.

JO. Every business is full of tricks, ours is n't different from the average! Whether we lose, you and I, our Prince and our bargain, you won't lose your money in the end, for I tell you that my father and I will repay that cheque to you—somehow, some time, I don't know how—and from today on, I have only one purpose in my life and that is to repay you, and I will.

(*Enter* HALLEN, *who gives a cable to* JO, *who opens and reads it.*)

HALLEN. A cable for you, miss. (*To* BOTES.) The same man from Streeter's again, sir.

BOTES. (*Turning his back to the audience —to* MRS. S.) For you!

MRS. S. I won't see him.

BOTES. Then I will! (*Turning to* HALLEN.) Send this by hand at once—(*Exit* HALLEN.) And you won't agree, Jo, not to tell your story to Prince Adolf?

JO. No.

BOTES. No? The Prince is coming at five—will you meet me here at half past four—

JO. Yes.

BOTES. Vic, you come with me, I want to hear what this man from Streeter's has to say. (BOTES *exits by the door,* VIC *following him slowly.*)—and perhaps your friend will find I have a trick to take hers.

(JO *bows her head, too full of emotion to trust herself to speak.*)

MRS. S. Jo! (*Coming to the back of the couch where* JO *is sitting.* JO *moves away from her.*) Jo!

Jo. (*Rises—her voice broken with sobs.*) Go away! Go away!

(Mrs. S. *looks at her a moment, and then leaves the stage. Jo hears the door shut. She lifts the cable, rises and reads it again.*)

Jo. "Great news for your devoted father! Happy congratulations and God bless my girl Jo on the happiest day of her life!"

ACT FOURTH.

(*The Scene is the same as in Act Third, later on the same day.* Victoria *is sitting at a table as* Hallen *comes in.*)

Hallen. Your father is coming now, miss.

Vic. Very well, Hallen.

(*Enter* Botes.)

Botes. Tell Miss Jo I want her here. (*Exit* Hallen.) You want me, Vic?

Vic. I want to know if you have kept your promise and made Mrs. Sheldon's note good?

Botes. Yes, and your friend must live up to her side of the bargain.

Vic. Are you really going to hold Jo to her word?

Botes. Yes.

Vic. Jo is lending herself to this abominable business of yours to protect someone else, I know. If I only had some money of my own!

Botes. Well, you have n't. I 'm too good a business man for that.

Vic. It is heartless and brutal of you.

Botes. Hold on! after all I 'm your father.

Vic. (*Almost breaking down, but still angry.*) I know it, and I 'm ashamed of you.

Botes. That 's enough.

Vic. I won't live here with you if you do this.

Botes. Please yourself.

Vic. But it 's a disgraceful marriage. He is n't worthy of Jo or he would n't ask it of her. That sort of man will tire of her in a year and marry some princess, and where will poor Jo be? It 's too dreadful.

Botes. It 's her own fault, if she does n't hold him. And anyway, it 's a good enough marriage for a scheming woman,—

Vic. She 's not a scheming woman.

(*Enter* Jo.)

Jo. Yes, Mr. Botes?

Botes. Ah, I 'm glad you 've come. Mrs. Sheldon 's not satisfied with running up a bill with Streeter's for several thousand pounds, and another with the Panchard people, but she 's been buying outrageously on credit, my credit, at half a dozen other shops.

Jo. But surely she means to pay.

Botes. What with? So far as I can make out neither of you have a penny.

Jo. I have my own letter of credit, but of course in face of any such amount, it 's nothing.

Botes. I can't have Mrs. Sheldon arrested for debt here in my house. That alone might upset this marriage. So I 've told my lawyer for the present I 'll be responsible—for the present, you understand. Unless you carry out your threat and tell Prince Adolf everything. Do that and Mrs. Sheldon can be arrested and welcome.

(*Enter* Cyril.)

Cyril. (*Giving* Jo *a note.* Jo *sits on sofa.*) I say, Jo, here 's a note I found on the hall table for you. The governor 's left word you and he were n't to be interrupted—but that 's nonsense. I won't have the governor putting on such airs. I noticed a royal crown on the envelope—a love letter—and he only saw you this morning. Rather wearing that, don't you think? (*Exit.*)

Jo. It 's from Prince Adolf. He did n't go to his hotel from here, and has only just received my note. He writes to say that he refuses to consider the—

Botes. What!

Jo. He says he withdraws his offer of marriage and is following his note at once to explain.

Botes. But good God! Then the whole thing 's up!

Jo. I hope so.

Botes. Vic, will you leave me alone with your friend, please? The Prince will be here in about twenty minutes.

Vic. No.

Jo. (*Rising and taking* Vic *to the door.*) Don't be afraid. I 've got to fight this battle out by myself and I might as well begin now.

Vic. Whatever you do, Jo, I am with you.

Jo. Thank you. (*Exit* Vic.)

BOTES. Now, why has Prince Adolf changed his mind like this?

JO. I will find out perhaps when he comes this afternoon.

BOTES. You seem pleased.

JO. I don't believe there ever was a woman so happy to be refused by the man she loves. In spite of all the horrors of this day, in spite of all the trouble I know I must still fight through—in spite of the fact that these very troubles make a marriage even more impossible than it was before! Still, I am happy!

BOTES. Why?

JO. You could n't understand.

BOTES. Why not? (*After a pause.*) Why not?

JO. Because you 're too selfish. Because you 're too wrapt up in getting everything you want for yourself at any sacrifice! Because you 're too senseless to other people's sufferings to sympathize with anyone's joys but your own. You belong to the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth school. You can't understand how this note means to me, that after all, he really loves me.

(*Enter* HALLEN.)

HALLEN. Mr. Botes, may I speak with you aside a moment, please?

BOTES. What is it? (*Goes to* HALLEN. HALLEN *whispers aside to* BOTES. BOTES *starts in great surprise.*) What! Miss Jo, do you know that your mother has run away?

JO. Run away?

BOTES. Yes, run away—sneaked off.

JO. It can't be true. (*Exit.*)

BOTES. (*To* HALLEN.) How did you find it out?

HALLEN. Her maid told Miss Botes' maid, hin confidence, as it were, but Maggie got scared, and let it hout.

BOTES. Does she know where she 's gone?

HALLEN. She has reason to suspect it 's Brussels, sir.

BOTES. Was anything said about Miss Jo?

HALLEN. Everything was kept secret from her, too, for fear she 'd stop them.

(*Enter* JO *and* VIC. BOTES *motions* HALLEN *off.*)

JO. It 's true, she 's gone. Oh, Mr. Botes, she 's gone. She told me this morning she might do it. She left my father in the lurch.

BOTES. How do you mean? Left your father in—

JO. That money you have given her—£40,000—it 's hers.

BOTES. No, at her own request the cheque was made out to a Mr. Prenter—president of some New York bank.

JO. Then I don't care what becomes of her.

BOTES. You did n't know she was going?

JO and VIC. No!

BOTES. You are really as surprised as you seem?

JO. Please, please!

BOTES. You make a good story.

JO. You don't believe me!

BOTES. My daughter does!

JO and VIC. Yes!

BOTES. Well, if Vic 's right about you, she 's right about me, too.

JO. How?

BOTES. That I 've treated you like a brute and ought to be ashamed.

VIC. Yes.

BOTES. Well, I believe I am ashamed.

JO. Mr. Botes—

BOTES. I 've pretty well come to the conclusion that you 're as innocent in the whole business as Vic is, and I 've been a blundering idiot. Now, I 've an idea that if my representative in New York can get hold of that lawyer who was here—

VIC. Mr. Wilton?

JO. I can give you his address.

BOTES. Good, I 'll cable. It may be that my money can be used as a loan to tide over a temporary difficulty. There, Vic. I 've practically asked your friend's pardon. (*To* JO.) That 's what I mean. (*Kisses* JO's *hand.*) How 's that, Vic?

VIC. Father, if you think I 'm going to throw my arms around your neck and thank you for coming to your senses, you 're very much mistaken. I 'm glad you 've waked up, but it 'll be a long time before I can forget what you 've made Jo suffer.

BOTES. Well! I 'm paying the bill—don't forget that.

(*Enter* HALLEN.)

HALLEN (*who is evidently under a great stress of excitement and with difficulty controlling his countenance.*) Mr. Hohen'etstein!

JO, BOTES and VIC. WHO?

HALLEN. Mr. Hohen'etstein.

(*Enter* PRINCE ADOLF, *who bows. Exit* HALLEN. BOTES *bows.* JO *and* VIC *start to curtsey. The* PRINCE *crosses to* JO *and stops her as she curtseys.*)

ALL. Mr. Who?
PRINCE. Mr. Hohenhetstein!
VIC. Your Royal—
PRINCE. Nein! Nein! Nicht mehr!
BOTES. Your Royal High—
PRINCE. Nein! (*To* ALL.) Alles der four hours since I haf go away of your house I haf been in der office of der dispatches I haf sent to mein fader and to der Prime Minister. I haf arranched dat I shall send a message at der Parliament.

(*The* PRINCE *finishes triumphantly. There is a moment's silence. Everybody is too surprised to speak at once.*)

BOTES. But you are not in earnest, sir?
PRINCE. O yah! And mein bruder he was very happy! He vill like to be King!
BOTES. Your brother!
PRINCE. Yah! It vas one great big machinery to make roll around, but I haf start him going!
VIC. (*Bursting into a joyful exclamation.*) Prince Adolf!
PRINCE. (*To* VIC.) Nicht Prince! It shall not alles be made immediate! It shall take up one little time. Aber! But! I haf mein mind made up I vill give me up der throne. I vill be Mr. Hohenhetstein as mein Cousin at Austria who is now Mr. Hapsburg in der Switzerland! And I vill dat it begin here, in dis house, *now*. For a special why!

(*Turns to* JO.)

JO. But your father?
PRINCE. Mein fader know now I vas in earnest, and he accepts.
BOTES. But—

(VIC *whispers to her father. He nods that he understands, and they steal out into the conservatory. They close the windows, look for a moment through windows, smiling, and disappear.*)

JO. (*Sitting on the sofa.*) Accepts!
PRINCE. Yah! I haf sent to him such a dispatch, dere vas not possible any doubt how I vas made up mein mind. (*Pulling the arm chair to the sofa he sits down.*) And he haf just answered to me, dat alles considered it vas besser so.
JO. Better?
PRINCE. Yah! Dat I vas alles too much republican. Dat ven I haf effer come to der throne I shall play der teffle mit it. Heinrich vill be king in mein place, and mein fader—(*He laughs.*) Ach! Lieber fader! He haf ended der dispatch, "for der loaf of heffen stop now vere you vas, and don't become one anarchist!"
JO. But to give up being King—won't you perhaps—some day—regret it?
PRINCE. No. I haf neffer like dat King business, what vas it? It vas just to wear alles a different uniform, haf your picture taked and get shot at—dat vas about all! But anyway—if I vas to speak of der glory of der throne—of mein country of good and happy people. Yah! If I vill spoke only of all der great things, still,—neffer mind, I am a modern, I am all for der new ideas, and der new thought and I vas better in der new country. Still again dat vas not really why I gif him up! Vill you not ask me for why I gif him up?
JO. (*Very softly.*) No—I dare n't.
PRINCE. Why not?
JO. For fear it might be for *me*—you must n't—you must n't!
PRINCE. You haf told me dis morning dat you no longer haf loafed me.
JO. Yes.
PRINCE. Dat vas right, nicht?
JO. (*Softly.*) No.
PRINCE. How vas dat, No?
JO. (*Very softly.*) It vas a lie!
PRINCE. No! You shall forgif me for what I haf asked from you dis morning!
JO. Even this morning I wanted to forgive you.
PRINCE. Goot! (*Takes her hand.*) Now I tell you for who I gif up mein throne! I gif it up for *you!*
JO. But something new has come up to separate us! Mrs. Sheldon has done dishonorable things and has run away!
PRINCE. Ven she haf run away, dat vas all right den!
JO. It may bring a scandal upon my father and on me. I could n't bring that scandal to *you* to help me carry.
PRINCE. Vhy not? Das macht nichts.
JO. What?
PRINCE. Dat makes nutting for me. I vill ask nothing besser dan to carry scandals for you alles!
JO. But don't you want to know what Mrs. Sheldon has done?
PRINCE. Nein, das machts nichts!
JO. But don't you want to know why I sent you that note a few hours ago?
PRINCE. Nein! *das macht nichts!*
JO. But I have nothing to give you in exchange for all you give up.
PRINCE. *Das macht nichts!*
JO. But some day if you should regret?

PRINCE. Nefer! I haf not much meinself to offer you. No position—not more.
JO. Das macht nichts!
PRINCE. And not much money either!
JO. *Das macht nichts!*
PRINCE. But I will make me a new life and a new money alone!
JO. No, not alone.
PRINCE. You *loaf* me again?
JO. The word is n't big enough!
PRINCE. I 'll find me another!
JO. No, the word macht nichts!
PRINCE. NO!!

(*He takes her face in his hands and they embrace.*)

THE NEW YORK IDEA

BY

Langdon Mitchell

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THE NEW YORK IDEA

The New York Idea represents American social comedy at its best. It portrays impersonally and artistically the effects of our divorce laws upon a group of very human beings, indicating cleverly the restraining influence upon their actions exercised by their varying respect for the importance of social values. They are all, however, fully aware of these values.

Langdon Elwyn Mitchell was born in Philadelphia, February 17, 1862. He is the son of the late Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, the physician and novelist. He was educated at St. Paul's School, at Concord, New Hampshire, and after three years' study abroad, studied law at Harvard and Columbia Universities and was admitted to the New York Bar in 1886. He has been a poet and playwright since 1883, his earlier works appearing under the pen-name of John Philip Varley. His first published drama was *Sylvian,* a tragedy partly in verse, laid in Cordova in the seventeenth century, published in *Sylvian and Other Poems* (1885). His other poetical work appeared under the title of *Poems* (1894). *Love in the Backwoods* (1896) consisted of short stories and novelettes. In 1892 Mr. Mitchell married Miss Marion Lea, of Philadelphia, who created the part of "Vida Phillimore" in *The New York Idea.* The dramatization of his father's novel *The Adventures of François,* played by Henry E. Dixey, was not successful, but his play *Becky Sharp,* founded on Thackeray's *Vanity Fair,* and played by Mrs. Fiske at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, September 12, 1899, was a decided success for two years and was revived by Mrs. Fiske ten years later. So great indeed was the success of the play that another American version was played during 1900–1, until stopped by injunction, and two versions were given in England during the season of 1901.

The New York Idea was first produced by Mrs. Fiske at the Lyric Theatre, New York City, November 19, 1906, with the cast as given. It was a very successful play and has been revived, Miss Grace George playing it in repertory during the season of 1915–16.

Under the name of *Jonathans Tochter, The New York Idea* was translated into German and played at the Kammerspiel Theater, Berlin, under the direction of Max Reinhardt, October 7, 1916. The criticism in the Berlin newspapers, especially the *Vossische Zeitung,* indicated that from the critics' point of view, the comedy was a charming one, but that international complications prevented at first, an impartial judgment of the play. Since then, it has had considerable success and is now being translated into Danish, Swedish and Hungarian.

Mr. Mitchell wrote no plays for some years, but has recently resumed active work. On October 11, 1916, at Atlantic City, New Jersey, his dramatization of

Thackeray's *Pendennis* was placed on the stage with Mr. John Drew in the leading part of "Major Pendennis." After a satisfactory tryout, it was taken to New York City.

The New York Idea was published in 1908 by W. H. Baker and Company. It is here reprinted through the courtesy of Mr. Mitchell and the publishers. The editor is indebted to Mr. Mitchell for a careful revision of the text made especially for this volume.

For an interesting criticism of *Becky Sharp,* see William Winter, *The Wallet of Time,* New York, 1913, vol. 2, pp. 273–286, and, for a very appreciative analysis of *The New York Idea* see Mr. William Archer's notice of the play in *The London Tribune* of May 27, 1907, reprinted in the published play. See also for *Becky Sharp, Plays of the Present,* by J. B. Clapp and E. F. Edgett, New York, 1902, pp. 32–4.

To Marion Lea

THE ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lyric Theatre, New York City, November 19, 1906

PHILIP PHILLIMORE.....Mr. Charles Harbury
MRS. PHILLIMORE, his mother.....Miss Ida Vernon
THE REVEREND MATTHEW PHILLIMORE, his brother.....Mr. Dudley Clinton
GRACE PHILLIMORE, his sister.....Miss Emily Stevens
MISS HENEAGE, his aunt.....Miss Blanche Weaver
WILLIAM SUDLEY, his cousin.....Mr. William B. Mack
MRS. VIDA PHILLIMORE, his divorced wife.....Miss Marion Lea
BROOKS, her footman.....Mr. George Harcourt
BENSON, her maid.....Miss Belle Bohn
SIR WILFRID CATES-DARBY.....Mr. George Arliss
JOHN KARSLAKE.....Mr. John Mason
MRS. CYNTHIA KARSLAKE, his divorced wife.....Mrs. Fiske
NOGAM, his valet.....Mr. Dudley Digges
TIM FIDDLER.....Mr. Robert V. Ferguson
THOMAS, the PHILLIMORES' family servant.....Mr. Richard Clarke

ACT I—Drawing-room in the Phillimore house, Washington Square. Wednesday afternoon, at five o'clock.

ACT II—Mrs. Vida Phillimore's Boudoir, Fifth Avenue. Thursday morning, at eleven.

ACT III—Same as Act I. Thursday evening, at ten.

ACT IV—John Karslake's House, Madison Avenue. Thursday, at midnight.

Scene—New York. Time—The Present

THE NEW YORK IDEA

ACT FIRST.

SCENE. *Living room in the house of* PHILIP PHILLIMORE. *Five o'clock of an afternoon of May. The general air and appearance of the room is that of an old-fashioned, decorous, comfortable interior. There are no electric lights and no electric bells. Two bell ropes as in old-fashioned houses. The room is in dark tones inclining to sombre and of old-fashioned elegance.*

(*The curtain rises, disclosing* MISS HENEAGE, MRS. PHILLIMORE *and* THOMAS. MISS HENEAGE *is a solidly built, narrow-minded woman in her sixties. She makes no effort to look younger than she is, and is expensively but quietly dressed, with heavy elegance. She commands her household and her family connection, and on the strength of a large and steady income feels that her opinion has its value.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *is a semi-professional invalid, refined and unintelligent. Her movements are weak and fatigued. Her voice is habitually plaintive and she is entirely a lady without a trace of being a woman of fashion.* THOMAS *is an easy-mannered, but entirely respectful family servant, un-English both in style and appearance. He has no deportment worthy of being so called, and takes an evident interest in the affairs of the family he serves.* MISS HENEAGE, *seated at the tea-table, faces the footlights.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *is seated at the left side of the table.* THOMAS *stands near by. The table is set for tea. There is a vase with flowers, a silver match-box, and a large old-fashioned tea urn on the table. The "Evening Post" is on the table.* MISS HENEAGE *and* MRS. PHILLIMORE *both have cups of tea.* MISS HENEAGE *sits up very straight, and pours tea for* GRACE, *who has just entered. She is a pretty and fashionably dressed girl of twenty. She speaks superciliously, coolly, and not too fast. She sits on the sofa, and does not lounge, wearing a gown suitable for spring visiting, hat, parasol, and gloves.*)

GRACE. (*As she crosses and sits down.*) I never in my life walked so far and found so few people at home. (*She pauses, taking off her gloves, and somewhat querulously continues.*) The fact is the nineteenth of May is ridiculously late to be in town.

MISS HENEAGE. Thomas, Mr. Phillimore's sherry?

THOMAS. The sherry, ma'am. (THOMAS *indicates a table where the decanter is set.*)

MISS HENEAGE. Mr. Phillimore's *Post?*

THOMAS. (*Pointing to the "Evening Post" on the tea-table.*) The *Post,* ma'am.

MISS HENEAGE. (*Indicates the cup.*) Miss Phillimore.

(THOMAS *takes a cup of tea to* GRACE. *There is silence while they all sip tea.* THOMAS *goes back, fills the sherry glass, remaining round and about the tea-table. They all drink tea during the following scene.*)

GRACE. The Dudleys were at home. They wished to know when my brother Philip was to be married, and where and how?

MISS HENEAGE. If the Dudleys were persons of breeding, they 'd not intrude their curiosity upon you.

GRACE. I *like* Lena Dudley.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Speaks slowly and gently.*) Do I know Miss Dudley?

GRACE. She knows Philip. She expects an announcement of the wedding.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. I trust you told her that my son, my sister and myself are all of the opinion that those who have been divorced should remarry with modesty and without parade.

GRACE. I told the Dudleys Philip's wedding was here, to-morrow.

MISS HENEAGE. (*To* MRS. PHILLIMORE, *picking up a sheet of paper from the table.*) I have spent the afternoon, Mary, in arranging and listing the wedding gifts, and in writing out the announcements of the wedding. I think I have attained a proper form of announcement. (*She takes the sheet of note paper and gives it to* THOMAS.) Of course, the announcement Philip himself made was quite out of the question. (GRACE *smiles.*) However, there is mine.

(*She points to the paper.* THOMAS *gives the list to* MRS. PHILLIMORE *and moves away.*)

GRACE. I hope you'll send an announcement to the Dudleys.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Reading plaintively, ready to make the best of things.*) "Mr. Philip Phillimore and Mrs. Cynthia Dean Karslake announce their marriage, May twentieth, at three o'clock, Nineteen A, Washington Square, New York." (*She replaces paper on* THOMAS'S *salver.*) It sounds very nice.

(THOMAS *hands the paper to* MISS HENEAGE.)

MISS HENEAGE. In my opinion it barely escapes sounding nasty. However, it is correct. The only remaining question is —to whom the announcement should not be sent. (*Exit* THOMAS.) I consider an announcement of the wedding of two divorced persons to be in the nature of an intimate communication. It not only announces the wedding—it also announces the divorce. (*She returns to her teacup.*) The person I shall ask counsel of is Cousin William Sudley. He promised to drop in this afternoon.

GRACE. Oh! We shall hear all about Cairo.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. William is judicious.

(*Re-enter* THOMAS.)

MISS HENEAGE. (*With finality.*) Cousin William will disapprove of the match unless a winter in Cairo has altered his moral tone.

THOMAS. (*Announces.*) Mr. Sudley.

(*Enter* WILLIAM SUDLEY, *a little oldish gentleman. He is and appears thoroughly insignificant. But his opinion of the place he occupies in the world is exalted. Though he is filled with self-importance, his manners, voice, presence are all those of a man of breeding.*)

MRS. PHILLIMORE *and* MISS HENEAGE. (*They rise and greet* SUDLEY; *a little tremulously.*) My dear William!

(*Exit* THOMAS.)

SUDLEY. (*He shakes hands with* MRS. PHILLIMORE, *soberly glad to see them.*) How d'ye do, Mary? A very warm May you're having, Sarah.

GRACE. (*She comes to him.*) Dear Cousin William!

MISS HENEAGE. Was n't it warm in Cairo when you left?

(*She will have the strict truth, or nothing; still, on account of* SUDLEY'S *impeccable respectability, she treats him with more than usual leniency.*)

SUDLEY. (*Sitting down.*) We left Cairo six weeks ago, Grace, so I've had no news since you wrote in February that Philip was engaged. (*Pause.*) I need not to say I consider Philip's engagement excessively regrettable. He is a judge upon the Supreme Court bench with a divorced wife—and such a divorced wife!

GRACE. Oh, but Philip has succeeded in keeping everything as quiet as possible.

SUDLEY. (*Acidly.*) No, my dear! He has not succeeded in keeping his former wife as quiet as possible. We had not been in Cairo a week when who should turn up but Vida Phillimore. She went everywhere and did everything no woman should!

GRACE. (*Unfeignedly interested.*) Oh, what did she do?

SUDLEY. She "did" Cleopatra at the tableaux at Lord Errington's! She "did" Cleopatra, and she did it robed only in some diaphanous material of a nature so transparent that—in fact she appeared to be draped in moonshine. (MISS HENEAGE *indicates the presence of* GRACE. *She rises.*) That was only the beginning. As soon as she heard of Philip's engagement, she gave a dinner in honor of it! Only divorcées were asked! And she had a dummy—yes, my dear, a dummy—at the head of the table. He stood for Philip—that is he sat for Philip! (*He rises, and goes up to table.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Irritated and disgusted.*) Ah!

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*With dismay and pain.*) Dear me!

MISS HENEAGE. (*Confident of the value of her opinion.*) I disapprove of Mrs. Phillimore.

SUDLEY. (*Taking cigarette.*) Of course you do, but has Philip taken to Egyptian cigarettes in order to celebrate my winter at Cairo?

GRACE. Those are Cynthia's.

SUDLEY. (*Thinking that no one is worth knowing whom he does not know.*) Who is "Cynthia"?

GRACE. Mrs. Karslake— She's staying here, Cousin William. She'll be down in a minute.

SUDLEY. (*Shocked.*) You don't mean to tell me—?—!

MISS HENEAGE. Yes, William, Cynthia is Mrs. Karslake—Mrs. Karslake has no

New York house. I disliked the publicity of a hotel in the circumstances, and accordingly when she became engaged to Philip, I invited her here.

SUDLEY. (*Suspicious and distrustful.*) And may I ask *who* Mrs. Karslake is?

MISS HENEAGE. (*With confidence.*) She was a Deane.

SUDLEY. (*Walking about the room, sorry to be obliged to concede good birth to any but his own blood.*) Oh, oh—well the Deanes are extremely nice people. (*Going to table.*) Was her father J. William Deane?

MISS HENEAGE. (*Nodding, still more secure.*) Yes.

SUDLEY. (*Giving in with difficulty.*) The family is an old one. J. William Deane's daughter? Surely he left a very considerable—

MISS HENEAGE. Oh, fifteen or twenty millions.

SUDLEY. (*Determined not to be dazzled.*) If I remember rightly she was brought up abroad.

MISS HENEAGE. In France and England—and I fancy brought up with a very gay set in very gay places. In fact she is what is called a "sporty" woman.

SUDLEY. (*Always ready to think the worst.*) We might put up with that. But you don't mean to tell me Philip has the—the—the—assurance to marry a woman who has been divorced by—

MISS HENEAGE. Not at all. Cynthia Karslake divorced her husband.

SUDLEY. (*Gloomily, since he has less fault to find than he expected.*) She divorced him! Ah! (*He sips his tea.*)

MISS HENEAGE. The suit went by default. And, my dear William, there are many palliating circumstances. Cynthia was married to Karslake only seven months. There are no—(*glancing at* GRACE) no hostages to Fortune! Ahem!

SUDLEY. (*Still unwilling to be pleased.*) Ah! What sort of a young woman is she?

GRACE. (*With the superiority of one who is not too popular.*) Men admire her.

MISS HENEAGE. She's not conventional.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Showing a faint sense of justice.*) I am bound to say she has behaved discreetly ever since she arrived in this house.

MISS HENEAGE. Yes, Mary—but I sometimes suspect that she exercises a degree of self-control—

SUDLEY. (*Glad to have something against some one.*) She claps on the lid, eh? And you think that perhaps some day she'll boil over? Well, of course fifteen or twenty millions—but who's Karslake?

GRACE. (*Very superciliously.*) He owns Cynthia K. She's the famous mare.

MISS HENEAGE. He's Henry Karslake's son.

SUDLEY. (*Beginning to make the best of it.*) Oh!—Henry!—Very respectable family. Although I remember his father served a term in the senate. And so the wedding is to be to-morrow?

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Assenting.*) To-morrow.

SUDLEY. (*Rising, his respectability to the front when he thinks of the ceremony.* GRACE *rises.*) To-morrow. Well, my dear Sarah, a respectable family with some means. We must accept her. But on the whole, I think it will be best for me not to see the young woman. My disapprobation would make itself apparent.

GRACE. (*Whispering to* SUDLEY.) Cynthia's coming. (*He doesn't hear.*)

(CYNTHIA *enters, absorbed in reading a newspaper. She is a young creature in her twenties, small and high-bred, full of the love of excitement and sport. Her manner is wide awake and keen and she is evidently in no fear of the opinion of others. Her dress is exceedingly elegant, but with the elegance of a woman whose chief interests lie in life out of doors. There is nothing horsey in her style, and her expression is youthful and ingenuous.*)

SUDLEY. (*Sententiously and determinedly epigrammatic.*) The uncouth modern young woman, eight feet high, with a skin like a rhinoceros and manners like a cave dweller—an habitué of the race-track and the divorce court—

GRACE. (*Aside to* SUDLEY.) Cousin William!

SUDLEY. Eh, oh!

CYNTHIA. (*Coming down, reading, immersed, excited, trembling. She lowers the paper to catch the light.*) "Belmont favorite—six to one—Rockaway—Rosebud, and Flying Cloud. Slow track—raw wind—hm, hm, hm— At the half, Rockaway forged ahead, when Rosebud under the lash made a bold bid for victory—neck by neck—for a quarter—when Flying Cloud slipped by the pair and won on the post by a nose in one forty nine!" (*Speaking with the enthusiasm*

of a sport.) Oh, I wish I'd seen the dear thing do it. Oh, it's Mr. Sudley! You must think me very rude. How do you do, Mr. Sudley?

(*She goes to* SUDLEY.)

SUDLEY. (*Bowing without cordiality.*) Mrs. Karslake.

(*Pause;* CYNTHIA *feels he should say something. As he says nothing, she speaks again.*)

CYNTHIA. I hope Cairo was delightful? Did you have a smooth voyage?

SUDLEY. (*Pompously.*) You must permit me, Mrs. Karslake—

CYNTHIA. (*With good temper, somewhat embarrassed, and talking herself into ease.*) Oh, please don't welcome me to the family. All that formal part is over, if you don't mind. I'm one of the tribe now! You're coming to our wedding to-morrow?

SUDLEY. My dear Mrs. Karslake, I think it might be wiser—

CYNTHIA. (*Still with cordial good temper.*) Oh, but you must come! I mean to be a perfect wife to Philip and all his relations! That sounds rather miscellaneous, but you know what I mean.

SUDLEY. (*Very sententiously.*) I am afraid—

CYNTHIA. (*Gay and still covering her embarrassment.*) If you don't come, it'll look as if you were not standing by Philip when he's in trouble! You'll come, won't you—but of course you will.

SUDLEY. (*After a self-important pause.*) I will come, Mrs. Karslake (*After a pause.*) Good-afternoon. (*In a tone of sorrow and light compassion.*) Good-bye, Mary. Good-afternoon, Sarah. (*Sighing.*) Grace, dear. (*To* MISS HENEAGE.) At what hour did you say the alimony commences?

MISS HENEAGE. (*Quickly and commandingly to cover his slip.*) The ceremony is at three P. M., William.

(SUDLEY *goes toward the door.*)

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*With fatigued voice and manner as she rises.*) I am going to my room to rest awhile.

(MRS. PHILLIMORE *goes up.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*To* SUDLEY.) Oh, William, one moment—I entirely forgot! I've a most important social question to ask you! (*She goes up slowly to the door with him.*) In regard to the announcements of the wedding—whom they shall be sent to and whom not. For instance—the Dudleys—

(*Exeunt* SUDLEY *and* MISS HENEAGE, *talking.*)

CYNTHIA. So that's Cousin William?

GRACE. Don't you like him?

CYNTHIA. (*Calmly sarcastic.*) Like him? I love him. He's so generous. He couldn't have received me with more warmth if I'd been a mulatto.

(THOMAS *re-enters.* PHILLIMORE *enters.* PHILIP PHILLIMORE *is a self-centered, short-tempered, imperious member of the respectable fashionables of New York. He is well and solidly dressed and in manner and speech evidently a man of family. He is accustomed to being listened to in his home circle and from the bench, and it is practically impossible for him to believe that he can make a mistake.*)

GRACE. (*Outraged.*) Really you know—

(CYNTHIA *crosses the stage and sits at the table.*) Philip!

(PHILIP *nods to* GRACE *absent-mindedly. He is in his working suit and looks tired. He comes down silently, crosses to tea-table, and bends over and kisses* CYNTHIA *on forehead. He goes to his chair, which* THOMAS *has moved to suit him. He sits, and sighs with satisfaction.*)

PHILIP. Ah, Grace! (*Exit* GRACE.) Well, my dear, I thought I should never extricate myself from the court room. You look very debonnair!

CYNTHIA. The tea's making. You'll have your glass of sherry?

PHILIP. (*The strain of the day has evidently been severe.*) Thanks! (*Taking it from* THOMAS; *sighing.*) Ah!

CYNTHIA. I can see it's been a tiring day with you.

PHILIP. (*As before.*) Hm!

(*He sips the tea.*)

CYNTHIA. Were the lawyers very long winded?

PHILIP. (*Almost too tired for speech.*) Prolix to the point of somnolence. It might be affirmed without inexactitude that the prolixity of counsel is the somnolence of the judiciary. I am fatigued, ah! (*A little suddenly, awaking to the fact that his orders have not been carried out to the letter.*) Thomas! My *Post* is not in its usual place!

CYNTHIA. It's here, Philip.

(THOMAS *gets it.*)

PHILIP. Thanks, my dear. (*Opening the "Post."*) Ah! This hour with you—is —is really the—the—(*absently*) the one

vivid moment of the day. (*Reading.*) Hm—shocking attack by the president on vested interests. Hm—too bad—but it 's to be expected. The people insisted on electing a desperado to the presidential office—they must take the hold-up that follows. (*Pause; he reads*) Hm! His English is lacking in idiom, his spelling in conservatism, his mind in balance, and his character in repose.

CYNTHIA. (*Amiable but not very sympathetic.*) You seem more fatigued than usual. Another glass of sherry, Philip?

PHILIP. Oh, I ought not to—

CYNTHIA. I think you seem a little more tired than usual.

PHILIP. Perhaps I am. (*She pours out sherry.* PHILIP *takes the glass.*) Ah, this hour is truly a grateful form of restful excitement. (*Pause.*) You, too, find it—eh? (*He looks at* CYNTHIA.)

CYNTHIA. (*With veiled sarcasm.*) Decidedly.

PHILIP. Decidedly what, my dear?

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) Restful.

PHILIP. Hm! Perhaps I need the calm more than you do. Over the case to-day I actually—eh—(*sipping*) slumbered. I heard myself do it. That 's how I know. A dressmaker sued on seven counts. (*Reading newspaper.*) Really, the insanity of the United States Senate—you seem restless, my dear. Ah—um—have you seen the evening paper? I see there has been a lightning change in the style or size of hats which ladies—

(*He sweeps a descriptive motion with his hand, giving paper to* CYNTHIA, *then moves his glass, reads, and sips.*)

CYNTHIA. The lamp, Thomas.

(THOMAS *blows out the alcohol lamp on the tea-table with difficulty. He blows twice. Each time he moves* PHILIP *starts. He blows again.*)

PHILIP. (*Irritably.*) Confound it, Thomas! What are you puffing and blowing at—?

THOMAS. It 's out, ma'am—yes, sir.

PHILIP. You 're excessively noisy, Thomas!

THOMAS. (*In a fluster.*) Yes, sir—I am.

CYNTHIA. (*Soothing* THOMAS'S *wounded feelings.*) We don't need you, Thomas.

THOMAS. Yes, ma'am.

PHILIP. Puffing and blowing and shaking and quaking like an automobile in an ecstasy! (*Exit* THOMAS.)

CYNTHIA. (*Not unsympathetically.*) Too bad, Philip! I hope my presence is n't too agitating?

PHILIP. Ah—it 's just because I value this hour with you, Cynthia—this hour of tea and toast and tranquillity. It 's quite as if we were married—happily married—already.

CYNTHIA. (*Admitting that married life is a blank, begins to look through paper.*) Yes, I feel as if we were married already.

PHILIP. (*Not recognizing her tone.*) Ah! It 's the calm, you see.

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) The calm? Yes—yes, it 's—it 's the calm.

PHILIP. (*Sighing.*) Yes, the calm—the Halcyon calm of—of second choice. Hm! (*He reads and turns over leaves of paper.* CYNTHIA *reads. Pause.*) After all, my dear—the feeling which I have for you—is—is—eh—the market is in a shocking condition of plethora! Hm—hm—and what are you reading?

CYNTHIA. (*Embarrassed.*) Oh, eh—well—I—eh—I 'm just running over the sporting news.

PHILIP. Oh! (*He looks thoughtful.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Beginning to forget* PHILIP *and to remember more interesting matters.*) I fancied Hermes would come in an easy winner. He came in nowhere. Nonpareil was ridden by Henslow—he 's a rotten bad rider. He gets nervous.

PHILIP. (*Reading still.*) Does he? Hm! I suppose you do retain an interest in horses and races. Hm—I trust some day the—ah—law will attract— Oh (*turning a page*), here 's the report of my opinion in that dressmaker's case—Haggerty *vs.* Phillimore.

CYNTHIA. Was the case brought against you? (*Puzzled.*)

PHILIP. (*A little uncomfortable.*) Oh—no. The suit was brought by Haggerty, Miss Haggerty, a dressmaker, against the—in fact, my dear, against the former Mrs. Phillimore. (*Pause; he reads.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Curious about the matter.*) How did you decide it?

PHILIP. I was obliged to decide in Mrs Phillimore's favor. Haggerty's plea was preposterous.

CYNTHIA. Did you—did you meet the—the—former—?

PHILIP. No.

CYNTHIA. I often see her at afternoon teas.

PHILIP. How did you recognize—

CYNTHIA. Why—(*opening paper*) because Mrs. Vida Phillimore's picture appears in every other issue of most of the evening papers. And I must confess I

was curious. But, I'm sure you find it very painful to meet her again.

PHILIP. (*Slowly, considering.*) No,—would you find it so impossible to meet Mr.—

CYNTHIA. (*Much excited and aroused.*) Philip! Don't speak of him. He's nothing. He's a thing of the past. I never think of him. I forget him!

PHILIP. (*Somewhat sarcastic.*) That's extraordinarily original of you to forget him.

CYNTHIA. (*Gently, and wishing to drop the subject.*) We each of us have something to forget, Philip—and John Karslake is to me— Well, he's dead!

PHILIP. As a matter of fact, my dear, he *is* dead, or the next thing to it—for he's bankrupt. (*Pause.*)

CYNTHIA. Bankrupt? (*Excited and moved.*) Let's not speak of him. I mean never to see him or think about him or even hear of him!

(*He assents. She reads her paper. He sips his tea and reads his paper. She turns a page, starts and cries out.*)

PHILIP. God bless me!

CYNTHIA. It's a picture of—of—

PHILIP. John Karslake?

CYNTHIA. Picture of him, and one of me, and in the middle between us "Cynthia K!"

PHILIP. "Cynthia K"?

CYNTHIA. (*Excited.*) My pet riding mare! The best horse he has! She's an angel even in a photograph! Oh! (*Reading.*) "John Karslake drops a fortune at Saratoga."

(*Rises and goes up and down excitedly* PHILIP *takes paper and reads.*)

PHILIP. (*Unconcerned, as the matter hardly touches him.*) Hem—ah—Advertises country place for sale—stables, famous mare "Cynthia K"—favorite riding mare of former Mrs. Karslake who is once again to enter the arena of matrimony with the well known and highly respected judge of—

CYNTHIA. (*Sensitive and much disturbed.*) Don't! Don't, Philip, please don't!

PHILIP. My dear Cynthia—take another paper—here's my *Post!* You'll find nothing disagreeable in the *Post.*

(CYNTHIA *takes the paper.*)

CYNTHIA (*After reading, sits near table.*) It's much worse in the *Post.* "John Karslake sells the former Mrs. Karslake's jewels—the famous necklace now at Tiffany's, and the sporty ex-husband sells his wife's portrait by Sargent"! Philip, I can't stand this.

(*She puts the paper on table.*)

PHILIP. Really, my dear, Mr. Karslake is bound to appear occasionally in print—or even you may have to meet him.

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

CYNTHIA. (*Determined and distressed.*) I won't meet him! I won't meet him. Every time I hear his name or "Cynthia K's" I'm so depressed.

THOMAS. (*Announcing with something like reluctance.*) Sir, Mr. Fiddler. Mr. Karslake's trainer.

(*Enter* FIDDLER.)

(*He is an English horse trainer, a wide-awake stocky well-groomed little cockney. He knows his own mind and sees life altogether through a stable door. Well-dressed for his station, and not young.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Excited and disturbed.*) Fiddler? Tim Fiddler? His coming is outrageous!

FIDDLER. A note for you, sir.

CYNTHIA. (*Impulsively.*) Oh, Fiddler—is that you?

FIDDLER. Yes'm!

CYNTHIA. (*In a half whisper, still speaking on impulse.*) How is she! Cynthia K? How's Planet II and the colt and Golden Rod? How's the whole stable? Are they well?

FIDDLER. No'm—we're all on the bum. (*Aside.*) Ever since you kicked us over!

CYNTHIA. (*Reproving him, though pleased.*) Fiddler!

FIDDLER. The horses is just simply gone to Egypt since you left, and so's the guv'nor.

CYNTHIA. (*Putting an end to* FIDDLER.) That will do, Fiddler.

FIDDLER. I'm waiting for an answer, sir.

CYNTHIA. What is it, Philip?

PHILIP. (*Uncomfortable.*) A mere matter of business. (*Aside to* FIDDLER.) The answer is, Mr Karslake can come. The—the coast will be clear.

(*Exit* FIDDLER.)

CYNTHIA. (*Amazed; rising.*) You're not going to see him?

PHILIP. But Karslake, my dear, is an old acquaintance of mine. He argues cases before me. I will see that you do not have to meet him.

(CYNTHIA *crosses in excited dejection.*)

(*Enter* MATTHEW. *He is a high church clergyman to a highly fashionable congregation. His success is partly due to his social position and partly to his elegance of speech, but chiefly to his inherent amiability, which leaves the sinner in happy peace and smiles on the just and unjust alike.*)

MATTHEW. (*Most amiably.*) Ah, my dear brother!

PHILIP. Matthew. (*Meeting him.*)

MATTHEW. (*Nodding to* PHILIP.) Good afternoon, my dear Cynthia. How charming you look! (CYNTHIA *sits at the tea-table. To* CYNTHIA.) Ah,—why were n't you in your pew yesterday? I preached a most original sermon.

(*He lays his hat and cane on the divan.*)

THOMAS. (*Aside to* PHILIP.) Sir, Mrs. Vida Phillimore's maid called you up on the telephone, and you 're to expect Mrs. Phillimore on a matter of business.

PHILIP. (*Astonished and disgusted.*) Here, impossible! (*To* CYNTHIA.) Excuse me, my dear!

(*Exit* PHILIP, *much embarrassed, followed by* THOMAS.)

MATTHEW. (*Coming down to chair, happily and pleasantly self-important.*) No, really, it was a wonderful sermon, my dear. My text was from Paul—"It is better to marry than to burn." It was a strictly logical sermon. I argued—that, as the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth,—there is nothing final in Nature; not even Death! And, as there is nothing final in Nature, not even Death;—so then if Death is not final—why should marriage be final? (*Gently.*) And so the necessity of—eh—divorce! You see? It was an exquisite sermon! All New York was there! And all New York went away happy! Even the sinners—if there were any! I don't often meet sinners—do you?

CYNTHIA. (*Indulgently, in spite of his folly, because he is kind.*) You 're such a dear, delightful Pagan! Here 's your tea!

MATTHEW. (*Sipping his tea.*) Why, my dear—you have a very sad expression!

CYNTHIA. (*A little bitterly.*) Why not?

MATTHEW. (*With sentimental sweetness.*) I feel as if I were of no use in the world when I see sadness on a young face. Only sinners should feel sad. You have committed no sin!

CYNTHIA. (*Impulsively.*) Yes, I have!

MATTHEW. Eh?

CYNTHIA. I committed the unpardonable sin—whe—when I married for love!

MATTHEW. One must not marry for anything else, my dear!

CYNTHIA. Why am I marrying your brother?

MATTHEW. I often wonder why? I wonder why you did n't choose to remain a free woman.

CYNTHIA. (*Going over the ground she has often argued with herself.*) I meant to; but a divorcée has no place in society. I felt horridly lonely! I wanted a friend. Philip was ideal as a friend—for months. Is n't it nice to bind a friend to you?

MATTHEW. Yes—yes!

(*He sets down the teacup.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Growing more and more excited and moved as she speaks.*) To marry a friend—to marry on prudent, sensible grounds—a man—like Philip? That 's what I should have done first, instead of rushing into marriage—because I had a wild, mad, sensitive, sympathetic—passion and pain and fury—of, I don't know what—that almost strangled me with happiness!

MATTHEW. (*Amiable and reminiscent.*) Ah—ah—in my youth—I,—I too!

CYNTHIA. (*Coming back to her manner of every day.*) And besides—the day Philip asked me I was in the dumps! And now—how about marrying only for love?

(*Re-enter* PHILIP.)

MATTHEW. Ah, my dear, love is not the only thing in the world!

PHILIP. (*Speaking as he enters.*) I got there too late, she 'd hung up.

CYNTHIA. Who, Philip?

PHILIP. Eh—a lady—eh—

(*Enter* THOMAS, *flurried, with card on salver.*)

THOMAS. A card for you, sir. Ahem—ahem—Mrs. Phillimore—that was, sir.

PHILIP. Eh?

THOMAS. She 's on the stairs, sir. (*He turns. Enter* VIDA. THOMAS *announces her as being the best way of meeting the difficulty.*) Mrs. Vida Phillimore!

(VIDA *comes in slowly, with the air of a spoiled beauty. She stops just inside the door and speaks in a very casual manner. Her voice is languorous and caressing. She is dressed in the excess of the French*

fashion and carries an outré parasol. She smiles and comes, undulating, to the middle of the stage. Exit THOMAS.)

VIDA. How do you do, Philip. (*Pause.*) Don't tell me I'm a surprise! I had you called up on the 'phone and I sent up my card—and, besides, Philip dear, when you have the—the—habit of the house, as unfortunately I have, you can't treat yourself like a stranger in a strange land. At least, I can't—so here I am. My reason for coming was to ask you about that B. and O. stock we hold in common. (*To* MATTHEW, *condescendingly, the clergy being a class of unfortunates debarred by profession from the pleasures of the world.*) How do you do? (*Pause. She then goes to the real reason of her visit.*) Do be polite and present me to your wife-to-be.

PHILIP. (*Awkwardly.*) Cynthia—

CYNTHIA. (*Cheerfully, with dash, putting the table between her and* VIDA.) We're delighted to see you, Mrs. Phillimore. I need n't ask you to make yourself at home, but will you have a cup of tea?

(MATTHEW *sits near the little table.*)

VIDA. (*To* PHILIP.) My dear, she's not in the least what I expected. I heard she was a dove! She's a very dashing kind of a dove! (*To* CYNTHIA; *coming to tea-table.*) My dear, I'm paying you compliments. Five lumps and quantities of cream. I find single life very thinning. (*To* PHILIP, *very calm and ready to be agreeable to any man.*) And how well you're looking! It must be the absence of matrimonial cares—or is it a new angel in the house?

CYNTHIA. (*Outraged at* VIDA'S *intrusion, but polite though delicately sarcastic.*) It's most amusing to sit in your place. And how at home you must feel here in this house where you have made so much trouble—I mean tea. (*Rising.*) Do you know it would be in much better taste if you would take the place you're accustomed to?

VIDA. (*As calm as before.*) My dear, I'm an intruder only for a moment; I shan't give you a chance to score off me again! But I must thank you, dear Philip, for rendering that decision in my favor—

PHILIP. I assure you—

VIDA. (*Unable to resist a thrust at the close of this speech.*) Of course, you would like to have rendered it against me. It was your wonderful sense of justice, and that's why I'm so grateful—if not to you, to your Maker!

PHILIP. (*He feels that this is no place for his future wife. Rises quickly and irascibly. To* CYNTHIA.) Cynthia, I would prefer that you left us.

(MATTHEW *comes to the sofa and sits.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Determined not to leave the field first, remains seated.*) Certainly, Philip!

PHILIP. I expect another visitor who—

VIDA. (*With flattering insistence, to* CYNTHIA.) Oh, my dear—don't go! The truth is—I came to see you! I feel most cordially towards you—and really, you know, people in our position should meet on cordial terms.

CYNTHIA. (*Taking it with apparent calm, but pointing her remarks.*) Naturally. If people in our position could n't meet, New York society would soon come to an end.

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

VIDA. (*Calm, but getting her knife in too.*) Precisely. Society's no bigger than a band-box. Why, it's only a moment ago I saw Mr. Karslake walking—

CYNTHIA. Ah!

THOMAS. (*Announcing clearly. Every one changes place, in consternation, amusement or surprise.* CYNTHIA *moves to leave the stage, but stops for fear of attracting* KARSLAKE'S *attention.*) Mr. John Karslake!

(*Enter* KARSLAKE. *He is a powerful, generous personality, a man of affairs, breezy, gay and careless. He gives the impression of being game for any fate in store for him. His clothes indicate sporting propensities and his taste in waistcoats and ties is brilliant.* KARSLAKE *sees first* PHILIP *and then* MATTHEW. *Exit* THOMAS.)

PHILIP. How do you do?

JOHN. (*Very gay and no respecter of persons.*) Good-afternoon, Mr. Phillimore. Hello—here's the church. (*Crossing to* MATTHEW *and shaking hands. He slaps him on the back.*) I had n't the least idea—how are you? By George, your reverence, that was a racy sermon of yours on Divorce! What was your text? (*Seeing* VIDA, *and bowing very politely.*) Galatians 4:2: "The more the merrier," or "Who next?" (*Smiling.*) As the whale said after Jonah!

(CYNTHIA *makes a sudden movement, and turns her cup over.* JOHN *faces about quickly and they face each other.* JOHN *gives a frank start. A pause.*)

JOHN. (*Bowing; astounded, in a low voice.*) Mrs. Karslake— I was not aware of the pleasure in store for me. I understood you were in the country. (*Recovering, crosses to chair.*) Perhaps you 'll be good enough to make me a cup of tea?—that is if the teapot was n't lost in the scrimmage. (*Pause.* CYNTHIA, *determined to equal him in coolness, returns to the tea-tray.*) Mr. Phillimore, I came to get your signature in that matter of Cox *vs.* Keely.

PHILIP. I shall be at your service, but pray be seated.

(*He indicates a chair by tea-table.*)

JOHN. (*Sitting beyond but not far from the tea-table.*) And I also understood you to say you wanted a saddle horse.

PHILIP. You have a mare called—eh—"Cynthia K"?

JOHN. (*Promptly.*) Yes—she 's not for sale.

PHILIP. Oh, but she 's just the mare I had set my mind on.

JOHN. (*With a touch of humor.*) You want her for yourself?

PHILIP. (*A little flustered.*) I—eh—I sometimes ride.

JOHN. (*He is sure of himself now.*) She 's rather lively for you, Judge. Mrs. Karslake used to ride her.

PHILIP. You don't care to sell her to me?

JOHN. She 's a dangerous mare, Judge, and she 's as delicate and changeable as a girl. I'd hate to leave her in your charge!

CYNTHIA. (*Eagerly, but in a low voice.*) Leave her in mine, Mr. Karslake!

JOHN. (*After slight pause.*) Mrs. Karslake knows all about a horse, but— (*Turning to* CYNTHIA.) Cynthia K 's got rather tricky of late.

CYNTHIA. (*Haughtily.*) You mean to say you think she 'd chuck me?

JOHN. (*With polite solicitude and still humorous. To* PHILIP.) I'd hate to have a mare of mine deprive you of a wife, Judge. (*Rising.*) She goes to Saratoga next week, C. W.

VIDA. (*Who has been sitting and talking to* MATTHEW *for lack of a better man, comes to talk to* KARSLAKE.) C. W.?

JOHN. (*Rising as she rises.*) Creditors willing.

VIDA. (*Crossing and sitting left of tea-table.*) I 'm sure your creditors are willing.

JOHN. Oh, they 're a breezy lot, my creditors. They 're giving me a dinner this evening.

VIDA. (*More than usually anxious to please.*) I regret I 'm not a breezy creditor, but I do think you owe it to me to let me see your Cynthia K! Can't you lead her around to my house?

JOHN. At what hour, Mrs. Phillimore?

VIDA. Say eleven? And you, too, might have a leading in my direction—771 Fifth Avenue.

(JOHN *bows.* CYNTHIA *hears and notes this.*)

CYNTHIA. Your cup of tea, Mr. Karslake.

JOHN. Thanks. (JOHN *gets tea and sips it.*) I beg your pardon—you have forgotten, Mrs. Karslake—very naturally, it has slipped from your memory, but I don't take sugar.

(CYNTHIA, *furious with him and herself. He hands cup back. She makes a second cup.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Cheerfully; in a rage.*) Sorry!

JOHN. (*Also apparently cheerful.*) Yes, gout. It gives me a twinge even to sit in the shadow of a sugar maple! First you riot, and then you diet!

VIDA. (*Calm and amused; aside to* MATTHEW.) My dear Matthew, he 's a darling! But I feel as if we were all taking tea on the slope of a volcano!

(MATTHEW *sits.*)

PHILIP. It occurred to me, Mr. Karslake, you might be glad to find a purchaser for your portrait by Sargent?

JOHN. It 's not *my* portrait. It 's a portrait of Mrs. Karslake, and to tell you the truth—Sargent 's a good fellow—I 've made up my mind to keep it—to remember the artist by.

(CYNTHIA *is wounded by this.*)

PHILIP. Hm!

(CYNTHIA *hands second cup of tea to* JOHN.)

CYNTHIA. (*With careful politeness.*) Your cup of tea, Mr. Karslake.

JOHN. (*Rising and taking tea with courteous indifference.*) Thanks—sorry to trouble you.

(*He drinks the cup of tea standing by the tea-table.*)

PHILIP. (*To make conversation.*) You 're selling your country place?

JOHN. If I was long of hair—I 'd sell that.

CYNTHIA. (*Excited. Taken out of her-*

self by the news.) You're not really selling your stable?

JOHN. (*Finishing his tea, he places empty cup on tea-table and reseats himself.*) Every gelding I've got—seven foals and a donkey! I don't mean the owner.

CYNTHIA. (*Still interested and forgetting the discomfort of the situation.*) How did you ever manage to come such a cropper?

JOHN. Streak of blue luck!

CYNTHIA. (*Quickly.*) I don't see how it's possible—

JOHN. You would if you'd been there. You remember the head man? (*Sits.*) Bloke?

CYNTHIA. Of course!

JOHN. Well, his wife divorced him for beating her over the head with a bottle of Fowler's Solution, and it seemed to prey on his mind. He sold me—

CYNTHIA. (*Horrified.*) Sold a race?

JOHN. About ten races, I guess.

CYNTHIA. (*Incredulous.*) Just because he'd beaten his wife?

JOHN. No. Because she divorced him.

CYNTHIA. Well, I can't see why that should prey on his mind!

(*Suddenly remembers.*)

JOHN. Well, I have known men that it stroked the wrong way. But he cost me eighty thousand. And then Urbanity ran third in the thousand dollar stakes for two-year-olds at Belmont.

CYNTHIA. (*She throws this remark in.*) I never had faith in that horse.

JOHN. And, of course, it never rains monkeys but it pours gorillas! So when I was down at St. Louis on the fifth, I laid seven to three on Fraternity—

CYNTHIA. Crazy! Crazy!

JOHN. (*Ready to take the opposite view.*) I don't see it. With her record she ought to have romped it an easy winner.

CYNTHIA. (*Pure sport.*) She has n't the stamina! Look at her barrel!

JOHN. Well, anyhow, Geranium finished me!

CYNTHIA. You did n't lay odds on Geranium!

JOHN. Why not? She's my own mare—

CYNTHIA. Oh!

JOHN. Streak o' bad luck—

CYNTHIA. (*Plainly anxious to say "I told you so."*) Streak of poor judgment! Do you remember the day you rode Billy at a six foot stone wall, and he stopped and you did n't, and there was a hornets' nest (MATTHEW *rises*) on the other side, and I remember you were hot just because I said you showed poor judgment? (*She laughs at the memory. A general movement of disapproval. She remembers the situation.*) I beg your pardon.

MATTHEW. (*Rising to meet* VIDA. *Hastily.*) It seems to me that horses are like the fourth gospel. Any conversation about them becomes animated almost beyond the limits of the urbane!

(VIDA, *disgusted by such plainness of speech, rises and goes to* PHILIP, *who waves her to a chair.*)

PHILIP. (*Formally.*) I regret that you have endured such reverses, Mr. Karslake. (JOHN *quietly bows.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Concealing her interest, she speaks casually.*) You have n't mentioned your new English horse—Pantomime. What did he do at St. Louis?

JOHN. (*Sitting.*) Fell away and ran fifth.

CYNTHIA. Too bad. Was he fully acclimated? Ah, well—

JOHN. We always differed—you remember—on the time needed—

MATTHEW. (*Coming to* CYNTHIA, *speaking to carry off the situation as well as to get a tip.*) Is n't there a—eh—a race to-morrow at Belmont Park?

JOHN. Yes. I'm going down in my auto.

CYNTHIA. (*Evidently wishing she might be going too.*) Oh!

MATTHEW. And what animal shall you prefer?

(*Covering his personal interest with amiable altruism.*)

JOHN. I'm backing Carmencita.

CYNTHIA. (*Gesture of despair.*) Carmencita! Carmencita!

(MATTHEW *goes to* VIDA.)

JOHN. You may remember we always differed on Carmencita.

CYNTHIA. (*Disgusted at* JOHN'S *dunderheadedness.*) But there's no room for difference. She's a wild, headstrong, dissatisfied, foolish little filly. The deuce could n't ride her—she'd shy at her own shadow—"Carmencita." Oh, very well, then, I'll wager you—and I'll give you odds too—"Decorum" will come in first, and I'll lay three to one he'll beat Carmencita by five lengths! How's that for fair?

JOHN. (*Never forgetting the situation.*) Sorry I'm not flush enough to take you.

CYNTHIA. (*Impetuously.*) Philip, dear, you lend John enough for the wager.

MATTHEW. (*As nearly horrified as so soft a soul can be.*) Ahem! Really—

JOHN. It's a sporty idea, Mrs. Karslake, but perhaps in the circumstances—

CYNTHIA. (*Her mind on her wager.*) In what circumstances?

PHILIP. (*With a nervous laugh.*) It does seem to me there is a certain impropriety—

CYNTHIA. (*Remembering the conventions, which, for a moment, had actually escaped her.*) Oh, I forgot. When horses are in the air—

MATTHEW. (*Pouring oil on troubled waters. Crossing, he speaks to* VIDA *at back of armchair, where she sits.*) It's the fourth gospel, you see.

(*Enter* THOMAS *with a letter on a salver, which he hands to* PHILIP.

CYNTHIA. (*Meekly.*) You are quite right, Philip. The fact is, seeing Mr. Karslake again (*laying on her indifference with a trowel*) he seems to me as much a stranger as if I were meeting him for the first time.

MATTHEW. (*Aside to* VIDA.) We are indeed taking tea on the slope of a volcano.

VIDA. (*She is about to go, but thinks she will have a last word with* JOHN.) I'm sorry your fortunes are so depressed, Mr. Karslake.

PHILIP. (*Looking at the card that* THOMAS *has just brought in.*) Who in the world is Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby?

(*General move.*)

JOHN. Oh—eh—Cates-Darby? (PHILIP *opens letter which* THOMAS *has brought with card.*) That's the English chap I bought Pantomime of.

PHILIP. (*To* THOMAS.) Show Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby in.

(*Exit* THOMAS. *The prospect of an Englishman with a handle to his name changes* VIDA'S *plans and instead of leaving the house, she goes to the sofa, and sits there.*)

JOHN. He's a good fellow, Judge. Place near Epsom. Breeder. Over here to take a shy at our races.

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

THOMAS. (*Announcing.*) Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby.

(*Enter* SIR WILFRID CATES-DARBY. *He is a high-bred, sporting Englishman. His manner, his dress and his diction are the perfection of English elegance. His movements are quick and graceful. He talks lightly and with ease. He is full of life and unsmiling good temper.*)

PHILIP. (*To* SIR WILFRID *and referring to the letter of introduction in his hand.*) I am Mr. Phillimore. I am grateful to Stanhope for giving me the opportunity of knowing you, Sir Wilfrid. I fear you find it warm?

SIR WILFRID. (*Delicately mopping his forehead.*) Ah, well—ah—warm, no—hot, yes! Deuced extraordinary climate yours, you know, Mr. Phillimore.

PHILIP. (*Conventional.*) Permit me to present you to—(*The unconventional situation pulls him up short. It takes him a moment to decide how to meet it. He makes up his mind to pretend that everything is as usual, and presents* CYNTHIA *first.*) Mrs. Karslake.

(SIR WILFRID *bows, surprised and doubtful.*)

CYNTHIA. How do you do?

PHILIP. And to Mrs. Phillimore. (VIDA *bows nonchalantly, but with a view to catching* SIR WILFRID'S *attention.* SIR WILFRID *bows, and looks from her to* PHILIP.) My brother—and Mr. Karslake you know.

SIR WILFRID. How do, my boy? (*Half aside, to* JOHN.) No idea you had such a charming little wife— What?— Eh?

(KARSLAKE *goes up to speak to* MATTHEW *and* PHILIP *in the further room.*)

CYNTHIA. You'll have a cup of tea, Sir Wilfrid?

SIR WILFRID. (*At table.*) Thanks, awfully. (*Very cheerfully.*) I'd no idea old John had a wife! The rascal never told me!

CYNTHIA. (*Pouring tea and facing the facts.*) I'm not Mr. Karslake's wife!

SIR WILFRID. Oh!— Eh?— I see—

(*Business of thinking it out.*)

VIDA. (*Who has been ready for some time to speak to him.*) Sir Wilfrid, I'm sure no one has asked you how you like our country?

SIR WILFRID. (*Going to* VIDA *and speaking, standing by her at sofa.*) Oh, well, as to climate and horses, I say nothing. But I like your American humor. I'm acquiring it for home purposes.

VIDA. (*Getting down to love as the basis of conversation.*) Aren't you going to

acquire an American girl for home purposes?

SIR WILFRID. The more narrowly I look the agreeable project in the face, the more I like it. Ought n't to say that in the presence of your husband.

(*He casts a look at* PHILIP, *who has gone into the next room.*)

VIDA. (*Cheerful and unconstrained.*) He's not my husband!

SIR WILFRID. (*Completely confused.*) Oh—eh?—my brain must be boiled. You are—Mrs.—eh—ah—of course, now I see! I got the wrong names! I thought you were Mrs. Phillimore. (*He sits by her.*) And that nice girl Mrs. Karslake! You 're deucedly lucky to be Mrs. Karslake. John 's a prime sort. I say, have you and he got any kids? How many?

VIDA. (*Horrified at being suspected of maternity, but speaking very sweetly.*) He 's not my husband.

SIR WILFRID. (*His good spirits all gone, but determined to clear things up.*) Phew! Awfully hot in here! Who the deuce is John's wife?

VIDA. He has n't any.

SIR WILFRID. Who 's Phillimore's wife?

VIDA. He has n't any.

SIR WILFRID. Thanks, fearfully! (*To* MATTHEW, *whom he approaches; suspecting himself of having lost his wits.*) Would you excuse me, my dear and Reverend Sir—you 're a churchman and all that—would you mind straightening me out?

MATTHEW. (*Most gracious.*) Certainly, Sir Wilfrid. Is it a matter of doctrine?

SIR WILFRID. Oh, damme—beg your pardon,—no, it 's not words, it 's women.

MATTHEW. (*Ready to be outraged.*) Women!

SIR WILFRID. It 's divorce. Now, the lady on the sofa—

MATTHEW. *Was* my brother's wife; he divorced her—incompatibility—Rhode Island. The lady at the tea-table *was* Mr. Karslake's wife; she divorced him—desertion—Sioux Falls. One moment—she is about to marry my brother.

SIR WILFRID. (*Cheerful again.*) I 'm out! Thought I never would be! Thanks!

(VIDA *laughs.*)

VIDA. (*Not a whit discountenanced and ready to please.*) Have you got me straightened out yet?

SIR WILFRID. Straight as a die! I say, you had lots of fun, did n't you? (*Going back to sofa.*) And so *she 's* Mrs. John Karslake?

VIDA. (*Calm, but secretly disappointed.*) Do you like her?

SIR WILFRID. My word!

VIDA. (*Fully expecting personal flattery.*) Eh?

SIR WILFRID. She 's a box o' ginger!

VIDA. You have n't seen many American women!

SIR WILFRID. Oh, have n't I?

VIDA. If you 'll pay me a visit to-morrow—at twelve, you shall meet a most charming young woman, who has seen you once, and who admires you—ah!

SIR WILFRID. I 'm there—what!

VIDA. Seven hundred and seventy-one Fifth Avenue.

SIR WILFRID. Seven seventy-one Fifth Avenue—at twelve.

VIDA. At twelve.

SIR WILFRID. Thanks! (*Indicating* CYNTHIA.) She 's a thoroughbred—you can see that with one eye shut. Twelve. (*Shaking hands.*) Awfully good of you to ask me. (*He joins* JOHN.) I say, my boy, your former 's an absolute certainty. (*To* CYNTHIA.) I hear you 're about to marry Mr. Phillimore, Mrs. Karslake?

(KARSLAKE *crosses to* VIDA; *they both go to sofa, where they sit.*)

CYNTHIA. To-morrow, 3 P. M., Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. (*Much taken with* CYNTHIA, *he addresses her.*) Afraid I 've run into a sort of family party, eh? (*Indicating* VIDA.) The Past and the Future—awfully chic way you Americans have of asking your divorced husbands and wives to drop in, you know—celebrate a christenin', or the new bride, or—

CYNTHIA. Do you like your tea strong?

SIR WILFRID. Middlin'.

CYNTHIA. Sugar?

SIR WILFRID. One!

CYNTHIA. Lemon?

SIR WILFRID. Just torture a lemon over it. (*He makes a gesture as of twisting a lemon peel. She gives tea.*) Thanks! So you do it to-morrow at three?

CYNTHIA. At three, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. Sorry!

CYNTHIA. Why are you sorry?

SIR WILFRID. Hate to see a pretty woman married. Might marry her myself.

CYNTHIA. Oh, but I 'm sure you don't admire American women.

SIR WILFRID. Admire you, Mrs. Karslake—

CYNTHIA. Not enough to marry me, I hope.

SIR WILFRID. Marry you in a minute! Say the word. Marry you now—here.

CYNTHIA. You don't think you ought to know me a little before—

SIR WILFRID. Know you? Do know you. (CYNTHIA *covers her hair with her handkerchief.*)

CYNTHIA. What color is my hair?

SIR WILFRID. Pshaw!

CYNTHIA. You see! You don't know whether I'm a chestnut or a strawberry roan! In the States we think a few months of friendship is quite necessary.

SIR WILFRID. Few months of moonshine! Never was a friend to a woman—thank God, in all my life.

CYNTHIA. Oh—oh, oh!

SIR WILFRID. Might as well talk about being a friend to a whiskey and soda.

CYNTHIA. A woman has a soul, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. Well, good whiskey is spirits—dozens o' souls!

CYNTHIA. You are so gross!

SIR WILFRID. (*Changing seat to above table.*) Gross? Not a bit! Friendship between the sexes is all fudge! I'm no friend to a rose in my garden. I don't call it friendship—eh—eh—a warm, starry night, moonbeams and ilex trees, "and a spirit who knows how" and all that—eh—(*Getting closer to her.*) You make me feel awfully poetical, you know—(PHILIP *comes down, glances nervously at* CYNTHIA *and* SIR WILFRID, *and walks up again.*) What's the matter? But, I say—poetry aside—do you, eh—(*Looking around to place* PHILIP.) Does he—y' know—is he—does he go to the head?

CYNTHIA. Sir Wilfrid, Mr. Phillimore is my sober second choice.

SIR WILFRID. Did you ever kiss him? I'll bet he fined you for contempt of court. Look here, Mrs. Karslake, if you're marryin' a man you don't care about—

CYNTHIA. (*Amused and excusing his audacity as a foreigner's eccentricity.*) Really!

SIR WILFRID. Well, I don't offer myself—

CYNTHIA. Oh!

SIR WILFRID. Not this instant—

CYNTHIA. Ah!

SIR WILFRID. But let me drop in to-morrow at ten.

CYNTHIA. What country and state of affairs do you think you have landed in?

SIR WILFRID. New York, by Jove! Been to school, too. New York is bounded on the North, South, East and West by the state of Divorce! Come, come, Mrs. Karslake, I like your country. You've no fear and no respect—no can't and lots of can. Here you all are, you see—your former husband, and your new husband's former wife—sounds like Ollendoff! Eh? So there you are, you see! But, jokin' apart—why do you marry him? Oh, well, marry him if you must! You can run around the corner and get a divorce afterwards—

CYNTHIA. I believe you think they throw one in with an ice-cream soda!

SIR WILFRID. (*Rising.*) Damme, my dear lady, a marriage in your country is no more than a—eh—eh—what do you call 'em? A "thank you, ma'am." That's what an American marriage is—a "thank you, ma'am." Bump—bump—you're over it and on to the next.

CYNTHIA. You're an odd fish! What? I believe I like you!

SIR WILFRID. 'Course you do! You'll see me when I call to-morrow—at ten? We'll run down to Belmont Park, eh?

CYNTHIA. Don't be absurd!

VIDA. (*She has finished her talk with* JOHN, *and breaks in on* SIR WILFRID, *who has hung about* CYNTHIA *too long to suit her.*) To-morrow at twelve, Sir Wilfrid!

SIR WILFRID. Twelve!

VIDA. (*Shaking hands with* JOHN.) Don't forget, Mr. Karslake—eleven o'clock to-morrow.

JOHN. (*Bowing assent.*) I won't!

VIDA. (*Coming to the middle of the stage and speaking to* CYNTHIA.) Oh, Mrs. Karslake, I've ordered Tiffany to send you something. It's a sugar bowl to sweeten the matrimonial lot! I suppose nothing would induce you to call?

CYNTHIA. (*Distantly and careless of offending.*) Thanks, no—that is, is "Cynthia K" really to be there at eleven? I'd give a gold mine to see her again.

VIDA. Do come!

CYNTHIA. If Mr. Karslake will accommodate me by his absence.

VIDA. Dear Mr. Karslake, you'll have to change your hour.

JOHN. Sorry, I'm not able to.

CYNTHIA. I can't come later for I'm to be married.

JOHN. It 's not as bad as that with me, but I am to be sold up—Sheriff, you know. Can't come later than eleven.

VIDA. (*To* CYNTHIA.) Any hour but eleven, dear.

CYNTHIA. (*Perfectly regardless of* VIDA, *and ready to vex* JOHN *if possible.*) Mrs. Phillimore, I shall call on you at eleven—to see Cynthia K. I thank you for the invitation. Good-afternoon.

VIDA. (*Aside to* JOHN, *crossing to speak quietly to him.*) It 's mere bravado; she won't come.

JOHN. You don't know her.

(*Pause. There is general embarrassment.* SIR WILFRID *plays with his eye-glass.* JOHN *is angry;* CYNTHIA *is triumphant;* MATTHEW *is embarrassed;* VIDA *is irritated;* PHILIP *is puzzled; everybody is at odds.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*For the first time being a witness to the pretty complications of divorce, he speaks to* MATTHEW.) Do you have it as warm as this ordinarily?

MATTHEW. (*For whom these moments are more than usually painful, and wiping his brow.*) It 's not so much the heat as the humidity.

JOHN. (*Looking at watch; he is glad to be off.*) I shall be late for my creditors' dinner.

SIR WILFRID. (*Coming down.*) Creditors' dinner.

JOHN. (*Reading note.*) Fifteen of my sporting creditors have arranged to give me a blow-out at Sherry's, and I 'm expected right away or sooner. And by the way, I was to bring my friends—if I had any. So now 's the time to stand by me! Mrs. Phillimore?

VIDA. Of course!

JOHN. (*Ready to embarrass* CYNTHIA, *if possible, and speaking as if he had quite forgotten their former relations.*) Mrs. Karslake—I beg your pardon. Judge? (PHILIP *declines.*) No? Sir Wilfrid?

SIR WILFRID. I 'm with you!

JOHN. (*To* MATTHEW.) Your Reverence?

MATTHEW. I regret—

SIR WILFRID. Is it the custom for creditors—

JOHN. Come on, Sir Wilfrid! (THOMAS *opens the door.*) Good-night, Judge—Your Reverence—

SIR WILFRID. Is it the custom—

JOHN. Hang the custom! Come on—I 'll show you a gang of creditors worth having!

(*Exit* SIR WILFRID *with* JOHN, *preceded by* VIDA. MATTHEW *crosses the stage, smiling, as if pleased, in a Christian way, with this display of generous gaiety. He looks at his watch.*)

MATTHEW. Good gracious! I had no idea the hour was so late. I 've been asked to a meeting with Maryland and Iowa, to talk over the divorce situation. (*Exit. His voice is heard off the stage.*) Good-afternoon! Good-afternoon!

(CYNTHIA *is evidently much excited. The outer door slams.* PHILIP *comes down the stage slowly.* CYNTHIA *stands, her eyes wide, her breathing rapid, until* PHILIP *speaks, when she seems suddenly to realize her position. There is a long pause.*)

PHILIP. (*With a superior air.*) I have seldom witnessed a more amazing cataclysm of jocundity! Of course, my dear, this has all been most disagreeable for you.

CYNTHIA. (*Excitedly.*) Yes, yes, yes!

PHILIP. I saw how much it shocked your delicacy.

CYNTHIA. (*Distressed and moved.*) Outrageous. (PHILIP *sits.*)

PHILIP. Do be seated, Cynthia. (*Taking up paper. Quietly.*) Very odd sort of an Englishman—that Cates-Darby!

CYNTHIA. Sir Wilfrid?—Oh, yes! (PHILIP *settles down to paper. To herself.*) Outrageous! I 've a great mind to go at eleven—just as I said I would!

PHILIP. Do sit down, Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. What? What?

PHILIP. You make me so nervous—

CYNTHIA. Sorry—sorry.

(*She sits down and seeing the paper, she takes it, looking at the picture of* JOHN KARSLAKE.)

PHILIP. (*Sighing with content.*) Ah! now that I see him, I don't wonder you could n't stand him. There 's a kind of —ah—spontaneous inebriety about him. He is incomprehensible! If I might with reverence cross question the Creator, I would say to him: "Sir, to what end or purpose did you create Mr. John Karslake?" I believe I should obtain no adequate answer! However (*sighing*) at last we have peace—and the *Post!* (PHILIP, *settling himself, reads paper;* CYNTHIA *looks at her paper, occasionally looking across at* PHILIP.) Forget the dust of the arena—the prolixity of counsel—the involuntary fatuity of things in

general. (*Pause. He reads.*) Compose yourself!

(MISS HENEAGE, MRS. PHILLIMORE *and* GRACE *enter.*)

(CYNTHIA *sighs without letting her sigh be heard. She tries to compose herself. She glances at paper and then hearing* MISS HENEAGE, *starts slightly.* MISS HENEAGE *and* MRS. PHILLIMORE *stop at table.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*She carries a sheet of paper.*) There, my dear Mary, is the announcement as I have now reworded it. I took William's suggestion. (MRS. PHILLIMORE *takes and casually reads it.*) I also put the case to him, and he was of the opinion that the announcement should be sent *only* to those people who are really *in* society.

(*She sits near table.* CYNTHIA *braces herself to bear the Phillimore conversation.*)

GRACE. I wish you'd make an exception of the Dudleys.

(CYNTHIA *rises and crosses to chair by the table.*)

MISS HENEAGE. And of course, that excludes the Oppenheims—the Vance-Browns.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. It's just as well to be exclusive.

GRACE. I do wish you'd make an exception of Lena Dudley.

MISS HENEAGE. We might, of course, include those new Girardos, and possibly—possibly the Paddingtons.

GRACE. I do wish you would take in Lena Dudley. (*They are now sitting.*)

MRS. PHILLIMORE. The mother Dudley is as common as a charwoman, and not nearly as clean.

PHILIP. (*Sighing, his own feelings as usual to the fore.*) Ah! I certainly am fatigued!

(CYNTHIA *begins to slowly crush the newspaper she has been reading with both hands, as if the effort of self-repression were too much for her.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Making the best of a gloomy future.*) We shall have to ask the Dudleys sooner or later to dine, Mary—because of the elder girl's marriage to that dissolute French Marquis.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Plaintively.*) I don't like common people any more than I like common cats and of course in my time—

MISS HENEAGE. I think I shall include the Dudleys.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. You think you'll include the Dudleys?

MISS HENEAGE. Yes, I think I will include the Dudleys!

(*Here* CYNTHIA *gives up. Driven desperate by their chatter, she has slowly rolled her newspaper into a ball, and at this point tosses it violently to the floor and bursts into hysterical laughter.*)

MRS. PHILLIMORE. Why, my dear Cynthia—compose yourself.

PHILIP. (*Hastily.*) What is the matter, Cynthia? (*They speak together.*)

MISS HENEAGE. Why, Mrs. Karslake, what is the matter?

GRACE. (*She comes quickly forward, saying.*) Mrs. Karslake!

ACT SECOND.

SCENE. MRS. VIDA PHILLIMORE'S *boudoir. The room is furnished to please an empty-headed, pleasure-loving and fashionable woman. The furniture, the ornaments, what pictures there are, are all witness to taste up-to-date. Two French windows open on to a balcony, from which the trees of Central Park can be seen. There is a table between them; a mirror and a scent bottle upon it. A lady's writing table stands between two doors, nearer centre of stage. There is another door near an open fireplace, which is filled with potted plants and andirons, not in use. Over it is a tall mirror. On the mantelpiece are French clock, candelabra, and vases. On a line with the fireplace, a lounge, gay with silk pillows. A florist's box, large and long, filled with American Beauty roses is on a low table near the head of the lounge. Small tables and light chairs are here and there. At rise of the curtain* BENSON *is seen looking about her. She is a neat and pretty little English lady's maid in black silk and a thin apron. She comes down the stage still looking about her, and inspects the flower box; then goes to the door of* VIDA'S *room and speaks to her.*

BENSON. Yes, ma'am, the flowers have come.

(*She holds the door open.*)

(VIDA, *in a morning gown, enters, slowly. She is smoking a cigarette in as æsthetic a manner as she can, and is evidently*

turned out in her best style for conquest.)

VIDA. (*Speaking with her back to the audience, always calm and, though civil, a little disdainful of her servant.*) Terribly garish light, Benson. Pull down the— (BENSON *obeys.*) Lower still—that will do. (*As she speaks, she goes about the room, giving the furniture a push here and there, arranging vases, etc.*) Men hate a clutter of chairs and tables. (*Stopping and taking up hand mirror, standing with back to audience.*) I really think I 'm too pale for this light.

BENSON. (*Quickly, understanding what is implied.*) Yes, ma'am. (*Exit* BENSON. VIDA *sits at the table. Knock at the door.*) Come!

(*Enter* BROOKS.)

BROOKS. (*An ultra-English footman, in plush and calves.*) Any horders, m' lady?

VIDA. (*Incapable of remembering the last man, or of considering the new one.*) Oh,—of course! You 're the new—

BROOKS. Footman, m' lady.

VIDA. (*As a matter of form.*) Your name?

BROOKS. Brooks, m' lady.

(*Reënter* BENSON *with rouge.*)

VIDA. (*Carefully giving instructions while she keeps her eyes on the glass and is rouged by* BENSON.) Brooks, I am at home to Mr. Karslake at eleven, not to any one else till twelve, when I expect Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby.

(BROOKS *is inattentive, watching* BENSON.)

BROOKS. Yes, m' lady.

VIDA. (*Calm, but wearied by the ignorance of the lower classes.*) And I regret to inform you, Brooks, that in America there are no ladies, except salesladies!

BROOKS. (*Without a trace of comprehension.*) Yes, m' lady.

VIDA. I am at home to no one but the two names I have mentioned. (BROOKS *bows and goes out. She dabs on rouge while* BENSON *holds glass.*) Is the men's club room in order?

BENSON. Perfectly, ma'am.

VIDA. Whiskey and soda?

BENSON. Yes, ma'am, and the ticker 's been mended. The British sporting papers arrived this morning.

VIDA. (*Looking at her watch which lies on the dressing table.*) My watch has stopped.

BENSON. (*Glancing at the French clock on the chimney-piece.*) Five to eleven, ma'am.

VIDA. (*Getting promptly to work.*) Hm, hm, I shall be caught. (*Rises.*) The box of roses, Benson! (BENSON *brings the box of roses, uncovers the flowers and places them at* VIDA'S *side.*) My gloves —the clippers, and the vase! (*Each of these things* BENSON *places in turn within* VIDA'S *range where she sits on the sofa. She has the long box of roses at her side on a small table, a vase of water on the floor by her side. She cuts the stems and places the roses in the vase. When she feels that she has reached a picturesque position, in which any onlooker would see in her a creature filled with the love of flowers and of her fellow man, she says:*) There!

(*The door opens and* BROOKS *enters;* VIDA *nods to* BENSON.)

BROOKS. (*Announcing stolidly.*) Sir John Karslake.

(*Enter* JOHN, *dressed in very nobby riding togs.*)

(*He comes in gaily and forcibly.* BENSON *gives way as he comes down. Exeunt* BROOKS *and* BENSON. JOHN *stops near the table.* VIDA, *from this point on, is busied with her roses.*)

VIDA. (*Languorously, but with a faint suggestion of humor.*) Is that really you, Sir John?

JOHN. (*Lively and far from being impressed by* VIDA.) I see now where we Americans are going to get our titles. Good-morning! You look as fresh as paint. (*He takes chair.*)

VIDA. (*Facing the insinuation with gentle pain.*) I hope you don't mean that? I never flattered myself for a moment you 'd come. You 're riding Cynthia K?

JOHN. (*Who has laid his gloves and riding crop on the table.*) Fiddler 's going to lead her round here in ten minutes!

VIDA. Cigars and cigarettes! Scotch?

(*She indicates that he will find them on a small table up stage.*)

JOHN. Scotch!

(*Going up quickly to the table and helping himself to Scotch and seltzer.*)

VIDA. And now *do* tell me all about *her!* (*Putting in her last roses; she keeps one rosebud in her hand, of a size suitable for a man's buttonhole.*)

JOHN. (*As he drinks.*) Oh, she's an adorable creature—delicate, high-bred, sweet-tempered—

VIDA. (*Showing her claws for a moment.*) Sweet-tempered? Oh, you're describing the horse! By "her," I meant—

JOHN. (*Irritated by the remembrance of his wife.*) Cynthia Karslake? I'd rather talk about the last tornado.

(*Sits.*)

VIDA. (*Soothing the savage beast.*) There is only one thing I want to talk about, and that is, *you!* Why were you unhappy?

JOHN. (*Still cross.*) Why does a dollar last such a short time?

VIDA. (*With curiosity.*) Why did you part?

JOHN. Did you ever see a schooner towed by a tug? Well, I parted from Cynthia for the same reason that the hawser parts from the tug—I could n't stand the tug.

VIDA. (*Sympathizing.*) Ah! (*Pause.*)

JOHN. (*Still cross.*) Awful cheerful morning chat.

VIDA. (*Excusing her curiosity and coming back to love as the only subject for serious conversation.*) I must hear the story, for I 'm anxious to know why I 've taken such a fancy to you!

JOHN. (*Very nonchalantly.*) Why do *I* like you?

VIDA. (*Doing her best to charm.*) I won't tell you—it would flatter you too much.

JOHN. (*Not a bit impressed by* VIDA, *but as ready to flirt as another.*) Tell me!

VIDA. There 's a rose for you.

(*Giving him the one she has in her hand.*)

JOHN. (*Saying what is plainly expected of him.*) I want more than a rose—

VIDA. (*Putting this insinuation by.*) You refuse to tell me—?

JOHN. (*Once more reminded of* CYNTHIA, *speaks with sudden feeling.*) There 's nothing to tell. We met, we loved, we married, we parted; or at least we wrangled and jangled. (*Sighing.*) Ha! Why were n't we happy? Don't ask me, why! It may have been *partly* my fault!

VIDA. (*With tenderness.*) Never!

JOHN. (*His mind on* CYNTHIA.) But I believe it 's all in the way a girl 's brought up. Our girls are brought up to be ignorant of life—they 're ignorant of life. Life is a joke, and marriage is a picnic and a man is a shawl-strap—'Pon my soul, Cynthia Deane—no, I can't tell you!

(*During the following, he walks about in his irritation.*)

VIDA. (*Gently.*) Please tell me!

JOHN. Well, she was an heiress, an American heiress—and she 'd been taught to think marriage meant burnt almonds and moonshine and a yacht and three automobiles, and she thought—I don't know what she thought, but I tell you, Mrs. Phillimore, marriage is three parts love and seven parts forgiveness of sins.

VIDA. (*Flattering him as a matter of course.*) She never loved you.

JOHN. (*On whom she has made no impression at all.*) Yes, she did. For six or seven months there was not a shadow between us. It was perfect, and then one day she went off like a pistol-shot! I had a piece of law work and could n't take her to see Flashlight race the Maryland mare. The case meant a big fee, big Kudos, and in sails Cynthia, Flashlight mad! And will I put on my hat and take her? No—and bang she goes off like a stick o' dynamite—what did I marry her for?—and words—pretty high words, until she got mad, when she threw over a chair and said, oh, well,—marriage was a failure, or it was with me, so I said she 'd better try somebody else. She said she would, and marched out of the room.

VIDA. (*Gently sarcastic.*) But she came back!

JOHN. She came back, but not as you mean. She stood at the door and said, "Jack, I shall divorce you." Then she came over to my study table, dropped her wedding ring on my law papers, and went out. The door shut, I laughed; the front door slammed, I damned. (*Pause. He crosses to the window.*) She never came back.

(*He comes back to where* VIDA *sits. She catches his hands.*)

VIDA. (*Hoping for a contradiction.*) She 's broken your heart.

JOHN. Oh, no!

(*He crosses to the chair by the lounge.*)

VIDA. (*Encouraged, begins to play the game again.*) You 'll never love again!

JOHN. (*Speaking to her from the foot of her sofa.*) Try me! Try me! Ah, no, Mrs. Phillimore, I shall laugh, live, love and make money again! And let me tell you one thing—I 'm going to rap her one

over the knuckles. She had a stick of a Connecticut lawyer, and he—well, to cut a legal story short, since Mrs. Karslake 's been in Europe, I have been quietly testing the validity of the decree of divorce. Perhaps you don't understand?

VIDA. (*Letting her innate shrewdness appear.*) Oh, about a divorce, everything!

JOHN. I shall hear by this evening whether the divorce will stand or not.

VIDA. But it 's to-day at three she marries—you won't let her commit bigamy?

JOHN. (*Shaking his head.*) I don't suppose I 'd go as far as that. It may be the divorce will hold, but anyway I hope never to see her again.

(*He sits beside her facing up the stage as she faces down.*)

VIDA. Ah, my poor boy, she has broken your heart. (*Believing that this is her psychological moment, she lays her hand on his arm, but draws it back as soon as he attempts to take it.*) Now don't make love to me.

JOHN. (*Bold and amused, but never taken in.*) Why not?

VIDA. (*With immense gentleness.*) Because I like you too much! (*More gaily.*) I might give in, and take a notion to like you still more!

JOHN. Please do!

VIDA. (*With gush and determined to be womanly at all hazards.*) Jack, I believe you 'd be a lovely lover!

JOHN. (*As before.*) Try me!

VIDA. (*Not hoping much from his tone.*) You charming, tempting, delightful fellow, I could love you without the least effort in the world,—but, no!

JOHN. (*Playing the game.*) Ah, well, now *seriously!* Between two people who have *suffered* and made their own mistakes—

VIDA. (*Playing the game too, but not playing it well.*) But you see, you don't *really* love me!

JOHN. (*Still ready to say what is expected.*) Cynthia—Vida, no man can sit beside you and look into your eyes without feeling—

VIDA. (*Speaking the truth as she sees it, seeing that her methods don't succeed.*) Oh! That 's not love! That 's simply—well, my dear Jack, it 's beginning at the wrong end. And the truth is you hate Cynthia Karslake with such a wholehearted hate, that you have n't a moment to think of any other woman.

JOHN. (*With sudden anger.*) I hate her!

VIDA. (*Very softly and most sweetly.*) Jack—Jack, I could be as foolish about you as—oh, as foolish as anything, my dear! And perhaps some day—perhaps some day you 'll come to me and say, Vida, I am totally indifferent to Cynthia —and then—

JOHN. And then?

VIDA. (*The ideal woman in mind.*) Then, perhaps, you and I may join hands and stroll together into the Garden of Eden. It takes two to find the Garden of Eden, you know—and once we 're on the inside, we 'll lock the gate.

JOHN. (*Gaily, and seeing straight through her veneer.*) And lose the key under a rose-bush!

VIDA. (*Agreeing very softly.*) Under a rose-bush! (*Very soft knock.*) Come!

(JOHN *rises quickly.*)

(*Enter* BENSON *and* BROOKS.)

BROOKS. (*Stolid and announcing.*) My lady—Sir Wilf—

(BENSON *stops him with a sharp movement and turns toward* VIDA.)

BENSON. (*With intention.*) Your dressmaker, ma'am.

(BENSON *waves* BROOKS *to go. Exit* BROOKS, *very haughtily.*)

VIDA. (*Wonderingly.*) My dressmaker, Benson? (*With quick intelligence.*) Oh, of course, show her up. Mr. Karslake, you won't mind for a few minutes using my men's club room? Benson will show you! You 'll find cigars and the ticker, sporting papers, whiskey; and, if you want anything special, just 'phone down to my "chef."

JOHN. (*Looking at his watch.*) How long?

VIDA. (*Very anxious to please.*) Half a cigar! Benson will call you.

JOHN. (*Practical.*) Don't make it too long. You see, there 's my sheriff's sale on at twelve, and those races this afternoon. Fiddler will be here in ten minutes, remember!

(*Door opens.*)

VIDA. (*To* JOHN.) Run along! (*Exit* JOHN. VIDA *suddenly practical, and with a broad gesture to* BENSON.) Everything just as it was, Benson! (BENSON *whisks the roses out of the vase and replaces them in the box. She gives* VIDA *scissors and empty vases, and when* VIDA *finds herself in precisely the same*

position which preceded JOHN'S *entrance, she says:*) There!

(*Enter* BROOKS, *as* VIDA *takes a rose from the basket.*)

BROOKS. (*Stolidly.*) Your ladyship's dressmaker! M'lady!

(*Enter* SIR WILFRID *in morning suit with boutonnière.*)

VIDA. (*With tender surprise and busy with the roses.*) Is that really you, Sir Wilfrid! I never flattered myself for an instant that you'd remember to come.

SIR WILFRID. (*Coming to her above end of sofa.*) Come? 'Course I come! Keen to come see you. By Jove, you know, you look as pink and white as a huntin' mornin'.

VIDA. (*Ready to make any man as happy as possible.*) You'll smoke?

SIR WILFRID. Thanks! (*He watches her as she trims and arranges the flowers.*) Awfully long fingers you have! Wish I was a rose, or a ring, or a pair of shears! I say, d' you ever notice what a devil of a fellow I am for originality, what? (*Unlike* JOHN, *he is evidently impressed by her.*) You've got a delicate little den up here! Not so much low livin' and high thinkin', as low lights and no thinkin' at all, I hope—eh?

(*By this time* VIDA *has filled a vase with roses and rises to sweep by him and if possible make another charming picture to his eyes.*)

VIDA. You don't mind my moving about?

SIR WILFRID. (*Impressed.*) Not if you don't mind my watchin'. (*He sits on the sofa.*) And sayin' how well you do it.

VIDA. It's most original of you to come here this morning. I don't quite see why you did.

(*She places the roses here and there, as if to see their effect, and leaves them on a small table near the door through which her visitors entered.*)

SIR WILFRID. Admiration.

VIDA. (*Sauntering slowly toward the mirror as she speaks.*) Oh, I saw that you admired her! And of course, she did say she was coming here at eleven! But that was only bravado! She won't come, and besides, I've given orders to admit no one!

SIR WILFRID. May I ask you—

(*He throws this in in the middle of her speech, which flows gently and steadily on.*)

VIDA. And indeed, if she came now, Mr. Karslake has gone, and her sole object in coming was to make him uncomfortable. (*She goes toward the table: stopping a half minute at the mirror to see that she looks as she wishes to look.*) Very dangerous symptom, too, that passionate desire to make one's former husband unhappy! But, I can't believe that your admiration for Cynthia Karslake is so warm that it led you to pay me this visit a half hour too early in the hope of seeing—

SIR WILFRID. (*Rising; most civil, but speaking his mind like a Briton.*) I say, would you mind stopping a moment! (*She smiles.*) I'm not an American, you know; I was brought up not to interrupt. But you Americans, it's different with you! If somebody didn't interrupt you, you'd go on forever.

VIDA. (*She passes him to tantalize.*) My point is you come to see Cynthia—

SIR WILFRID. (*He believes she means it.*) I came hopin' to see—

VIDA. (*As before.*) Cynthia!

SIR WILFRID. (*Perfectly single-minded and entirely taken in.*) But I would have come even if I'd known—

VIDA. (*Evading him while he follows.*) I don't believe it!

SIR WILFRID. (*As before.*) Give you my word I—

VIDA. (*The same.*) You're here to see *her!* And of course—

SIR WILFRID. (*Determined to be heard because, after all, he's a man.*) May I have the—eh—the floor? (VIDA *sits in a chair.*) I was jolly well bowled over with Mrs. Karslake, I admit that, and I hoped to see her here, but—

VIDA. (*Talking nonsense and knowing it.*) You had another object in coming. In fact, you came to see Cynthia, and you came to see me! What I really long to know, is why you wanted to see *me!* For, of course, Cynthia's to be married at three! And, if she was n't she would n't have you!

SIR WILFRID. (*Not intending to wound; merely speaking the flat truth.*) Well, I mean to jolly well ask her.

VIDA. (*Indignant.*) To be your wife?

SIR WILFRID. Why not?

VIDA. (*As before.*) And you came here, to my house—in order to ask her—

SIR WILFRID. (*Truthful even on a subtle point.*) Oh, but that's only my first reason for coming, you know.

VIDA. (*Concealing her hopes.*) Well, now I *am* curious—what is the second?

SIR WILFRID. (*Simply.*) Are you feelin' pretty robust?

VIDA. I don't know!

SIR WILFRID. (*Crossing to buffet.*) Will you have something, and then I'll tell you!

VIDA. (*Gaily.*) Can't I support the news without—

SIR WILFRID. (*Trying to explain his state of mind, a thing he has never been able to do.*) Mrs. Phillimore, you see it's this way. Whenever you're lucky, you're too lucky. Now, Mrs. Karslake is a nipper and no mistake, but as I told you, the very same evenin' and house where I saw her—

(*He attempts to take her hand.*)

VIDA. (*Gently rising and affecting a tender surprise.*) What!

SIR WILFRID. (*Rising with her.*) That's it!—You're over!

(*He suggests with his right hand the movement of a horse taking a hurdle.*)

VIDA. (*Very sweetly.*) You don't really mean—

SIR WILFRID. (*Carried away for the moment by so much true womanliness.*) I mean, I stayed awake for an hour last night, thinkin' about you.

VIDA. (*Speaking to be contradicted.*) But, you've just told me—that Cynthia—

SIR WILFRID. (*Admitting the fact.*) Well, she did—she did bowl my wicket, but so did you—

VIDA. (*Taking him very gently to task.*) Don't you think there's a limit to—

(*She sits.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Roused by so much loveliness of soul.*) Now, see here, Mrs. Phillimore! You and I are not bottle babies, eh, are we? You've been married and—I—I've knocked about, and we both know there's a lot of stuff talked about—eh, eh, well, you know:—the one and only—that a fellow can't be awfully well smashed by two at the same time, don't you know! All rubbish! You know it, and the proof of the puddin's in the eatin', I am!

VIDA. (*As before.*) May I ask where I come in?

SIR WILFRID. Well, now, Mrs. Phillimore, I'll be frank with you, Cynthia's my favorite, but you're runnin' her a close second in the popular esteem!

VIDA. (*Laughing, determined not to take offense.*) What a delightful, original, fantastic person you are!

SIR WILFRID. (*Frankly happy that he has explained everything so neatly.*) I knew you'd take it that way!

VIDA. And what next, pray?

SIR WILFRID. Oh, just the usual,—eh,—thing,—the—eh—the same old question, don't you know. Will you have me if she don't?

VIDA. (*A shade piqued, but determined not to risk showing it.*) And you call that the same old usual question?

SIR WILFRID. Yes, I know, but—but will you? I sail in a week; we can take the same boat. And—eh—eh—my dear Mrs. —may n't I say Vida, I'd like to see you at the head of my table.

VIDA. (*With velvet irony.*) With Cynthia at the foot?

SIR WILFRID. (*Practical, as before.*) Never mind Mrs. Karslake,—I admire her—she's—but you have your own points! And you're here, and so 'm I!—damme, I offer myself, and my affections, and I'm no icicle, my dear, tell you that for a fact, and, and in fact what's your answer!—(VIDA *sighs and shakes her head.*) Make it, yes! I say, you know, my dear Vida—

(*He catches her hands.*)

VIDA. (*She slips them from him.*) Unhand me, dear villain! And sit further away from your second choice! What can I say? I'd rather have *you* for a lover than any man I know! You must be a lovely lover!

SIR WILFRID. I am!

(*He makes a second effort to catch her fingers.*)

VIDA. Will you kindly go further away and be good!

SIR WILFRID. (*Quite forgetting* CYNTHIA.) Look here, if you say yes, we'll be married—

VIDA. In a month!

SIR WILFRID. Oh, no—this evening!

VIDA. (*Incapable of leaving a situation unadorned.*) This evening! And sail in the same boat with *you?* And shall we sail to the Garden of Eden and stroll into it and lock the gate on the inside and then lose the key—under a rose-bush?

SIR WILFRID. (*Pausing, and after consideration, saying.*) Yes; yes, I say—that's too clever for me!

(*He draws nearer to her to bring the understanding to a crisis.*)

VIDA. (*A soft knock at the door.*) My maid—come!

SIR WILFRID. (*Swinging out of his chair and going to sofa.*) Eh?

(*Enter* BENSON.)

BENSON. (*To* VIDA.) The new footman, ma'am—he's made a mistake. He's told the lady you're at home.

VIDA. What lady?

BENSON. Mrs. Karslake; and she's on the stairs, ma'am.

VIDA. Show her in.

(SIR WILFRID *has been turning over the roses. On hearing this, he faces about with a long stemmed one in his hand. He uses it in the following scene to point his remarks.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*To* BENSON, *who stops.*) One moment! (*To* VIDA.) I say, eh—I'd rather not see her!

VIDA. (*Very innocently.*) But you came here to see her.

SIR WILFRID. (*A little flustered.*) I'd rather not. Eh,—I fancied I'd find you and her together—but her—(*coming a step nearer*) findin' me with you looks so dooced intimate,—no one else, d'ye see, I believe she'd—draw conclusions—

BENSON. Pardon me, ma'am—but I hear Brooks coming!

SIR WILFRID. (*To* BENSON.) Hold the door!

VIDA. So you don't want her to know—?

SIR WILFRID. (*To* VIDA.) Be a good girl now—run me off somewhere!

VIDA. (*To* BENSON.) Show Sir Wilfrid the men's room.

(*Enter* BROOKS.)

SIR WILFRID. The men's room! Ah! Oh! Eh!

VIDA. (*Beckoning him to go at once.*) Sir Wil—

(*He hesitates, then as* BROOKS *comes on, he flings off with* BENSON.)

BROOKS. Lady Karslake, milady!

VIDA. Anything more inopportune! I never dreamed she'd come—(*Enter* CYNTHIA, *veiled. She comes down quickly.*) My dear Cynthia, you don't mean to say— (*Languorously.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Rather short, and visibly agitated.*) Yes, I've come.

VIDA. (*Polite, but not urgent.*) Do take off your veil.

CYNTHIA. (*Doing as* VIDA *asks.*) Is no one here?

VIDA. (*As before.*) Won't you sit down?

CYNTHIA. (*Agitated and suspicious.*) Thanks, no— That is, yes, thanks. Yes! You haven't answered my question?

(CYNTHIA *waves her hand through the smoke, looks at the smoke suspiciously, looks for the cigarette.*)

VIDA. (*Playing innocence in the first degree.*) My dear, what makes you imagine that any one's here!

CYNTHIA. You've been smoking.

VIDA. Oh, puffing away!

(CYNTHIA *sees the glasses on the table.*)

CYNTHIA. And drinking—a pair of drinks? (*She sees* JOHN'S *gloves on the table at her elbow.*) Do they fit you, dear? (VIDA *smiles;* CYNTHIA *picks up crop and looks at it and reads her own name.*) "Jack, from Cynthia."

VIDA. (*without taking the trouble to double for a mere woman.*) Yes, dear; it's Mr. Karslake's crop, but I'm happy to say he left me a few minutes ago.

CYNTHIA. He left the house? (VIDA *smiles.*) I wanted to see him.

VIDA. (*With a shade of insolence.*) To quarrel?

CYNTHIA. (*Frank and curt.*) I wanted to see him.

VIDA. (*Determined to put* CYNTHIA *in the wrong.*) And I sent him away because I did n't want you to repeat the scene of last night in my house.

CYNTHIA. (*Looks at* JOHN'S *riding crop and is silent.*) Well, I can't stay. I'm to be married at three, and I had to play truant to get here!

(*Enter* BENSON.)

BENSON. (*To* VIDA.) There's a person, ma'am, on the sidewalk.

VIDA. What person, Benson?

BENSON. A person, ma'am, with a horse.

CYNTHIA. (*Happily agitated.*) It's Fiddler with Cynthia K.

(*She goes up rapidly and looks out back through the window.*)

VIDA. (*To* BENSON.) Tell the man I'll be down in five minutes.

CYNTHIA. (*Looking down from the balcony with delight.*) Oh, there she is!

VIDA. (*Aside to* BENSON.) Go to the club room, Benson, and say to the two gentlemen I can't see them at present—I'll send for them when—

BENSON. (*Listening.*) I hear some one coming.

VIDA. Quick!

(BENSON *leaves the door, which opens, and* JOHN *enters.* JOHN *comes in slowly, carelessly.* VIDA *whispers to* BENSON.)

BENSON. (*Crosses, goes close to* JOHN *and whispers.*) Beg par—

VIDA. (*Under her breath.*) Go back!

JOHN. (*Not understanding.*) I beg pardon!

VIDA. (*As before.*) Go back!

JOHN. (*The same.*) Can't! I've a date! With the sheriff!

VIDA. (*A little cross.*) Please use your eyes.

JOHN. (*Laughing and flattering* VIDA.) I am using my eyes.

VIDA. (*Fretted.*) Don't you see there's a lovely creature in the room?

JOHN. (*Again taking the loud upper-hand.*) Of course there is.

VIDA. Hush!

JOHN. (*Teasingly.*) But what I want to know is—

VIDA. Hush!

JOHN. (*Delighted at getting a rise.*)—is when we're to stroll in the Garden of Eden—

VIDA. Hush!

JOHN. —and lose the key. (*To put a stop to this, she lightly tosses her handkerchief into his face.*) By George, talk about attar of roses!

CYNTHIA. (*Up at window, excited and moved at seeing her mare once more.*) Oh, she's a darling! (*She turns.*) A perfect darling! (JOHN *starts; he sees* CYNTHIA *at the same instant that she sees him.*) Oh! I didn't know you were here. (*Pause; then with "take-it-or-leave-it" frankness.*) I came to see *you!*

(JOHN *looks extremely dark and angry;* VIDA *rises.*)

VIDA. (*To* CYNTHIA, *most gently, and seeing there's nothing to be made of* JOHN.) Oh, pray feel at home, Cynthia, dear! (*Stands by door; to* JOHN.) When I've a nice street frock on, I'll ask you to present me to Cynthia K.

(*Exit* VIDA.)

CYNTHIA. (*Agitated and frank.*) Of course, I told you yesterday I was coming here.

JOHN. (*Irritated.*) And I was to deny myself the privilege of being here?

CYNTHIA. (*Curt and agitated.*) Yes.

JOHN. (*Ready to fight.*) And you guessed I would do that?

CYNTHIA. No.

JOHN. What?

CYNTHIA. (*Above table. She speaks with agitation, frankness and good will.*) Jack—I mean, Mr. Karslake,—no, I mean, Jack! I came because—well, you see, it's my wedding day!—and—and—I—I—was rude to you last evening. I'd like to apologize and make peace with you before I go—

JOHN. (*Determined to be disagreeable.*) Before you go to your last, long home!

CYNTHIA. I came to apologize.

JOHN. But you'll remain to quarrel!

CYNTHIA. (*Still frank and kind.*) I will not quarrel. No!—and I'm only here for a moment. I'm to be married at three, and just look at the clock! Besides, I told Philip I was going to Louise's shop, and I did—on the way here; but, you see, if I stay too long he'll telephone Louise and find I'm not there, and he might guess I was here. So you see I'm risking a scandal. And now, Jack, see here, I lay my hand on the table, I'm here on the square, and,—what I want to say is, why—Jack, even if we have made a mess of our married life, let's put by anger and pride. It's all over now and can't be helped. So let's be human, let's be reasonable, and let's be kind to each other! Won't you give me your hand? (JOHN *refuses.*) I wish you every happiness!

JOHN. (*Turning away, the past rankling.*) I had a client once, a murderer; he told me he murdered the man, and he told me, too, that he never felt so kindly to anybody as he did to that man after he'd killed him!

CYNTHIA. Jack!

JOHN. (*Unforgiving.*) You murdered my happiness!

CYNTHIA. I won't recriminate!

JOHN. And now I must put by anger and pride! I do! But not self-respect, not a just indignation—not the facts and my clear memory of them!

CYNTHIA. Jack!

JOHN. No!

CYNTHIA. (*With growing emotion, and holding out her hand.*) I give you one more chance! Yes, I'm determined to be generous. I forgive everything you ever did to me. I'm ready to be friends. I wish you every happiness and every—every—horse in the world! I can't do more than that! (*She offers her hand again.*) You refuse?

JOHN. (*Moved, but surly.*) I like wild-

cats and I like Christians, but I don't like Christian wildcats! Now I'm close hauled, trot out your tornado! Let the Tiger loose! It's the tamer, the man in the cage that has to look lively and use the red hot crowbar! But by Jove, I'm out of the cage! I'm a mere spectator of the married circus!

(*He puffs vigorously.*)

CYNTHIA. Be a game sport then! Our marriage was a wager; you wagered you could live with me. You lost; you paid with a divorce; and now is the time to show your sporting blood. Come on, shake hands and part friends.

JOHN. Not in this world! Friends with you, no! I have a proper pride. I don't propose to put my pride in my pocket.

CYNTHIA. (*Jealous and plain spoken.*) Oh, I would n't ask you to put your pride in your pocket while Vida's handkerchief is there. (JOHN *looks angered.*) Pretty little bijou of a handkerchief! (CYNTHIA *takes handkerchief out.*) And she is charming, and divorced, and reasonably well made up.

JOHN. Oh, well, Vida is a woman. (*Toying with handkerchief.*) I'm a man, a handkerchief is a handkerchief, and as some old Aristotle or other said, whatever concerns a woman, concerns me!

CYNTHIA. (*Not oblivious of him, but in a low voice.*) Insufferable! Well, yes. (*She sits. She is too much wounded to make any further appeal.*) You're perfectly right. There's no possible harmony between divorced people! I withdraw my hand and all good feeling. No wonder I could n't stand you. Eh? However, that's pleasantly past! But at least, my dear Karslake, let us have some sort of beauty of behavior! If we cannot be decent, let us endeavor to be graceful. If we can't be moral, at least we can avoid being vulgar.

JOHN. Well—

CYNTHIA. If there's to be no more marriage in the world—

JOHN. (*Cynical.*) Oh, but that's not it; there's to be more and more and more!

CYNTHIA. (*With a touch of bitterness.*) Very well! I repeat then, if there's to be nothing but marriage and divorce, and remarriage, and redivorce, at least, at least, those who *are* divorced can avoid the vulgarity of meeting each other here, there, and everywhere!

JOHN. Oh, that's where you come out!

CYNTHIA. I thought so yesterday, and today I know it. It's an insufferable thing to a woman of any delicacy of feeling to find her husband—

JOHN. Ahem—former!

CYNTHIA. *Once* a husband always—

JOHN. (*Still cynical.*) Oh, no! Oh, dear, no.

CYNTHIA. To find her—to find the man she has once lived with—in the house of —making love to—to find you here! (JOHN *smiles and rises.*) You smile,—but I say, it should be a social axiom, no woman should have to meet her former husband.

JOHN. (*Cynical and cutting.*) Oh, I don't know; after I've served my term I don't mind meeting my jailor.

CYNTHIA. (JOHN *takes a chair near* CYNTHIA.) It's indecent—at the horse-show, the opera, at races and balls, to meet the man who once— It's not civilized! It's fantastic! It's half baked! Oh, I never should have come here! (*He sympathizes, and she grows irrational and furious.*) But it's entirely your fault!

JOHN. My fault?

CYNTHIA. (*Working herself into a rage.*) Of course. What business have you to be about—to be at large. To be at all!

JOHN. Gosh!

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) To be where I am! Yes, it's just as horrible for you to turn up in my life as it would be for a dead person to insist on coming back to life and dinner and bridge!

JOHN. Horrid idea!

CYNTHIA. Yes, but it's *you* who behave just as if you were not dead, just as if I'd not spent a fortune on your funeral. You do; you prepare to bob up at afternoon teas,—and dinners—and embarrass me to death with your extinct personality!

JOHN. Well, of course we *were* married, but it did n't quite kill me.

CYNTHIA. (*Angry and plain spoken.*) You killed yourself for me—I divorced you. I buried you out of my life. If any human soul was ever dead, you are! And there's nothing I so hate as a gibbering ghost.

JOHN. Oh, I say!

CYNTHIA. (*With hot anger.*) Go gibber and squeak where gibbering and squeaking are the fashion!

JOHN. (*Laughing and pretending to a coldness he does not feel.*) And so, my

dear child, I 'm to abate myself as a nuisance! Well, as far as seeing you is concerned, for my part it 's just like seeing a horse who 's chucked you once. The bruises are O. K., and you see him with a sort of easy curiosity. Of course, you know, he 'll jolly well chuck the next man!—Permit me! (JOHN *picks up gloves, handkerchief and parasol and gives her these as she drops them one by one in her agitation.*) There 's pleasure in the thought.

CYNTHIA. Oh!

JOHN. And now, may I ask you a very simple question? Mere curiosity on my part, but, why did you come here this morning?

CYNTHIA. I have already explained that to you.

JOHN. Not your real motive. Permit me!

CYNTHIA. Oh!

JOHN. But I believe I have guessed your real—permit me—your real motive!

CYNTHIA. Oh!

JOHN. (*With mock sympathy.*) Cynthia, I am sorry for you.

CYNTHIA. H'm?

JOHN. Of course we had a pretty lively case of the fever—the mutual attraction fever, and we *were* married a very short time. And I conclude that 's what 's the matter with *you!* You see, my dear, seven months of married life is too short a time to cure a bad case of the fancies.

CYNTHIA. (*In angry surprise.*) What?

JOHN. (*Calm and triumphant.*) That 's my diagnosis.

CYNTHIA. (*Slowly and gathering herself together.*) I don't think I understand.

JOHN. Oh, yes, you do; yes, you do.

CYNTHIA. (*With blazing eyes.*) What do you mean?

JOHN. Would you mind not breaking my crop! Thank you! I mean (*With polite impertinence.*) that ours was a case of premature divorce, and, ahem, you 're in love with me still.

(*He pauses.* CYNTHIA *has one moment of fury, then she realizes at what a disadvantage this places her. She makes an immense effort, recovers her calm, thinks hard for a moment more, and then, has suddenly an inspiration.*)

CYNTHIA. Jack, some day you 'll get the blind staggers from conceit. No, I 'm not in love with you, Mr. Karslake, but I should n't be at all surprised if she were. She 's just your sort, you know. She 's a man-eating shark, and you 'll be a toothsome mouthful. Oh, come now, Jack, what a silly you are! Oh, yes, you are, to get off a joke like that; me—in love with— (*She looks at him.*)

JOHN. Why are you here? (*She laughs and begins to play her game.*) Why are you here?

CYNTHIA. Guess! (*She laughs.*)

JOHN. Why are you—

CYNTHIA. (*Quickly.*) Why am I here! I 'll tell you. I 'm going to be married. I had a longing, an irresistible longing to see you make an ass of yourself just once more! It happened!

JOHN. (*Uncertain and discomfited.*) I know better!

CYNTHIA. But I came for a more serious purpose, too. I came, my dear fellow, to make an experiment on myself. I 've been with you thirty minutes; and— (*She sighs with content.*) It 's all right!

JOHN. What 's all right?

CYNTHIA. (*Calm and apparently at peace with the world.*) I 'm immune.

JOHN. Immune?

CYNTHIA. You 're not catching any more! Yes, you see, I said to myself, if I fly into a temper—

JOHN. You did!

CYNTHIA. If I fly into a temper when I see him, well that shows I 'm not yet so entirely convalescent that I can afford to have Jack Karslake at my house. If I remain calm I shall ask him to dinner.

JOHN. (*Routed.*) Ask me if you dare! (*He rises.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Getting the whip hand for good.*) Ask you to dinner? Oh, my dear fellow. (JOHN *rises.*) I 'm going to do much more than that. (*She rises.*) We must be friends, old man! We must meet, we must meet often, we must show New York the way the thing should be done, and, to show you I mean it—I want you to be my best man, and give me away when I 'm married this afternoon.

JOHN. (*Incredulous and impatient.*) You don't mean that! (*He puts back chair.*)

CYNTHIA. There you are! Always suspicious!

JOHN. You don't mean that!

CYNTHIA. (*Hiding her emotion under a sportswoman's manner.*) Don't I? I ask you, come! And come as you are! And I 'll lay my wedding gown to Cynthia K that you won't be there! If you 're there, you get the gown, and if you 're not, I get Cynthia K!—

JOHN. (*Determined not to be worsted.*) I take it!

CYNTHIA. Done! Now, then, we'll see which of us two is the real sporting goods! Shake! (*They shake hands on it.*) Would you mind letting me have a plain soda? (JOHN *goes to the table, and, as he is rattled and does not regard what he is about, he fills the glass three-fourths full with whiskey. He comes to* CYNTHIA *and gives her this. She looks him in the eye with an air of triumph.*) Thanks. (*Maliciously, as* VIDA *enters.*) Your hand is a bit shaky. I think *you* need a little King William.

(JOHN *shrugs his shoulders, and as* VIDA *immediately speaks,* CYNTHIA *defers drinking.*)

VIDA. (*To* CYNTHIA.) My dear, I'm sorry to tell you your husband—I mean, my husband—I mean Philip—he's asking for you over the 'phone. You must have said you were coming here. Of course, I told him you were not here, and hung up.

(*Enter* BENSON.)

BENSON. (*To* VIDA.) Ma'am, the new footman's been talking with Mr. Phillimore on the wire. (VIDA *makes a gesture of regret.*) He told Mr. Phillimore that his lady was here, and if I can believe my ears, ma'am, he's got Sir Wilfrid on the 'phone now!

(*Enter* SIR WILFRID.)

SIR WILFRID. (*Comes from room, perplexed and annoyed.*) I say y' know—extraordinary country; that old chap, Phillimore, he's been damned impertinent over the wire! Says I've run off with Mrs. Karslake—talks about "Louise"! Now who the dooce is Louise? He's comin' round here, too—I said Mrs. Karslake was n't here—(*Seeing* CYNTHIA.) Hello! Good job! What a liar I am!

BENSON. (*To* VIDA.) Mr. Fiddler, ma'am, says the mare is gettin' very restive.

(JOHN *hears this and moves at once. Exit* BENSON.)

JOHN. (*To* VIDA.) If that mare's restive, she'll break out in a rash.

VIDA. (*To* JOHN.) Will you take me?

JOHN. Of course. (*They go to the door.*)

CYNTHIA. (*To* JOHN.) Tata, old man! Meet you at the altar! If I don't, the mare's mine!

(SIR WILFRID *looks at her amazed.*)

VIDA. (*To* CYNTHIA.) Do the honors, dear, in my absence!

JOHN. Come along, come along, never mind them! A horse is a horse!

(*Exeunt* JOHN *and* VIDA, *gaily and in haste. At the same moment* CYNTHIA *drinks what she supposes to be her glass of plain soda. As it is whiskey straight, she is seized with astonishment and a fit of coughing.* SIR WILFRID *relieves her of the glass.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Indicating contents of glass.*) I say, do you ordinarily take it as high up—as seven fingers and two thumbs?

CYNTHIA. (*Coughs.*) Jack poured it out. Just shows how groggy he was! And now, Sir Wilfrid—

(*She gets her things to go.*)

SIR WILFRID. Oh, you can't go!

(*Enter* BROOKS.)

CYNTHIA. I am to be married at three.

SIR WILFRID. Let him wait. (*Aside to* BROOKS, *whom he meets near the door.*) If Mr. Phillimore comes, bring his card up.

BROOKS. (*Going.*) Yes, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. (*To* BROOKS, *as before.*) To me! (*He tips him.*)

BROOKS. (*Bowing.*) To you, Sir Wilfrid. (*Exit* BROOKS.)

SIR WILFRID. (*Returning to* CYNTHIA.) I've got to have my innings, y' know! (*He looks at her more closely.*) I say, you've been crying!—

CYNTHIA. King William!

SIR WILFRID. You *are* crying! Poor little gal!

CYNTHIA. (*Tears in her eyes.*) I feel all shaken and cold.

(*Enter* BROOKS, *with card.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Astonished and sympathetic.*) Poor little gal.

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) I did n't sleep a wink last night. (*With disgust.*) Oh, what is the matter with me?

SIR WILFRID. Why, it's as plain as a pikestaff! You—(BROOKS *has brought salver to* SIR WILFRID. *A card lies upon it.* SIR WILFRID *takes it and says aside to* BROOKS.) Phillimore? (BROOKS *assents. Aloud to* CYNTHIA, *calmly deceitful.*) Who's Waldorf Smith? (CYNTHIA *shakes her head. To* BROOKS,

returning card to salver.) Tell the gentleman Mrs. Karslake is not here!

(*Exit* BROOKS.)

CYNTHIA. (*Aware that she has no business where she is.*) I thought it was Philip!

SIR WILFRID. (*Telling the truth as if it were a lie.*) So did I! (*With cheerful confidence.*) And now, Mrs. Karslake, I'll tell you why you're cryin'. (*He sits beside her.*) You're marryin' the wrong man! I'm sorry for you, but you're such a goose. Here you are, marryin' this legal luminary. What for? You don't know! He don't know! But I do! You pretend you're marryin' him because it's the sensible thing; not a bit of it. You're marryin' Mr. Phillimore because of all the other men you ever saw he's the least like Jack Karslake.

CYNTHIA. That's a very good reason.

SIR WILFRID. There's only one good reason for marrying, and that is because you'll die if you don't!

CYNTHIA. Oh, I've tried that!

SIR WILFRID. The Scripture says: "Try! try! again!" I tell you, there's nothing like a w'im!

CYNTHIA. What's that? W'im? Oh, you mean a *whim!* Do please try and say Whim!

SIR WILFRID. (*For the first time emphasizing his H in the word.*) Whim. You must have a w'im—w'im for the chappie you marry.

CYNTHIA. I had—for Jack.

SIR WILFRID. Your w'im wasn't wimmy enough, my dear! if you'd had more of it, and tougher, it would ha' stood y' know! Now, I'm not proposin'!

CYNTHIA. (*Diverted at last from her own distress.*) I hope not!

SIR WILFRID. Oh, I will later! It's not time yet! As I was saying—

CYNTHIA. And pray, Sir Wilfrid, when will it be time?

SIR WILFRID. As soon as I see you have a w'im for me! (*Rising, he looks at his watch.*) And now, I'll tell you what we'll do! We've got just an hour to get there in, my motor's on the corner, and in fifty minutes we'll be at Belmont Park.

CYNTHIA. (*Her sporting blood fired.*) Belmont Park!

SIR WILFRID. We'll do the races, and dine at Martin's—

CYNTHIA. (*Tempted.*) Oh, if I only could! I can't! I've got to be married! You're awfully nice; I've almost got a "w'im" for you already.

SIR WILFRID. (*Delighted.*) There you are! I'll send a telegram!

(*She shakes her head. He sits and writes at the table.*)

CYNTHIA. No, no, no!

SIR WILFRID. (*Reads what he writes.*) "Off with Cates-Darby to races. Please postpone ceremony till seven-thirty."

CYNTHIA. Oh, no, it's impossible!

SIR WILFRID. (*Accustomed to have things go his way.*) No more than breathin'! You can't get a w'im for me, you know, unless we're together, so together we'll be!

(*Enter* JOHN KARSLAKE.)

And to-morrow you'll wake up with a jolly little w'im—(*Reads.*) "Postpone ceremony till seven-thirty." There. (*He puts on her cloak. Sees* JOHN.) Hello!

JOHN. (*Surly.*) Hello! Sorry to disturb you.

SIR. WILFRID. (*Cheerful as possible.*) Just the man! (*Giving him the telegraph form.*) Just step round and send it, my boy. Thanks! (JOHN *reads it.*)

CYNTHIA. No, no, I can't go!

SIR WILFRID. Cockety-coo-coo-can't. I say, you must!

CYNTHIA. (*Positively.*) *No!*

JOHN. (*Astounded.*) Do you mean you're going—

SIR WILFRID. (*Very gay.*) Off to the races, my boy!

JOHN. (*Angry and outraged.*) Mrs. Karslake can't go with you there!

(CYNTHIA *starts, amazed at his assumption of marital authority, and delighted that she will have an opportunity of outraging his sensibilities.*)

SIR WILFRID. Oho!

JOHN. An hour before her wedding!

SIR WILFRID. (*Gay and not angry.*) May I know if it's the custom—

JOHN. (*Jealous and disgusted.*) It's worse than eloping—

SIR WILFRID. Custom, y' know, for the husband, that was, to dictate—

JOHN. (*Thoroughly vexed.*) By George there's a limit!

CYNTHIA. What? What? What? (*Gathers up her things.*) What did I hear you say?

SIR WILFRID. Ah!

JOHN. (*Angry.*) I say there's a limit—

CYNTHIA. (*More and more determined to arouse and excite* JOHN.) Oh, there's a limit, is there?

JOHN. There is! I bar the way! It means reputation—it means—

CYNTHIA. (*Enjoying her opportunity.*) We shall see what it means!

SIR WILFRID. Aha!

JOHN. (*To* CYNTHIA.) I'm here to protect your reputation—

SIR WILFRID. (*To* CYNTHIA.) We've got to make haste, you know.

CYNTHIA. Now, I'm ready—

JOHN. (*To* CYNTHIA.) Be sensible. You're breaking off the match—

CYNTHIA. (*Excitedly.*) What's that to you?

SIR WILFRID. It's boots and saddles!

JOHN. (*He takes his stand between them and the door.*) No thoroughfare!

SIR WILFRID. Look here, my boy—!

CYNTHIA. (*Catching at the opportunity of putting* JOHN *in an impossible position.*) Wait a moment, Sir Wilfrid! Give me the wire! (*Facing him.*) Thanks! (*She takes the telegraph form from him and tears it up.*) There! Too rude to chuck him by wire! But you, Jack, you've taken on yourself to look after my interests, so I'll just ask you, old man, to run down to the Supreme Court and tell Philip—nicely, you know—I'm off with Sir Wilfrid and where! Say I'll be back by seven, if I'm not later! And make it clear, Jack, I'll marry him by eight-thirty or nine at the latest! And mind *you're* there, dear! And now, Sir Wilfrid, we're off.

JOHN. (*Staggered and furious, giving way as they pass him.*) I'm not the man to—to carry—

CYNTHIA. (*Quick and dashing.*) Oh, yes, you are.

JOHN. —a message from you.

CYNTHIA. (*Triumphant.*) Oh, yes, you are; you're just exactly the man!

(*Exeunt* CYNTHIA *and* SIR WILFRID.)

JOHN. Great miracles of Moses!

ACT THIRD.

SCENE.—*The same as that of Act First, but the room has been cleared of too much furniture, and arranged for a wedding ceremony. The curtain rises on* MRS. PHILLIMORE *reclining on the sofa,* MISS HENEAGE *is seated left of table,* SUDLEY *is seated at its right, while* GRACE *is on the sofa. There are cushions of flowers, alcove of flowers, flowers in vase, pink and white hangings, wedding bell of roses, calla lilies, orange blossoms, a ribbon of white stretched in front of an altar of flowers; two cushions for the couple to kneel on; two candelabra at each side of back of arch on pedestals. The curtain rises. There is a momentary silence, that the audience may take in these symbols of marriage. Every member of the Phillimore family is irritable, with suppressed irritation.*

SUDLEY. (*Impatiently.*) All very well, my dear Sarah. But you see the hour. Twenty to ten! We have been here since half-past two.

MISS HENEAGE. You had dinner?

SUDLEY. I did not come here at two to have dinner at eight, and be kept waiting until ten! And, my dear Sarah, when I ask where the bride is—

MISS HENEAGE. (*With forced composure.*) I have told you all I know. Mr. John Karslake came to the house at lunch time, spoke to Philip, and they left the house together.

GRACE. Where is Philip?

MRS. PHILLMORE. (*Feebly irritated.*) I don't wish to be censorious or to express an actual opinion, but I must say it's a bold bride who keeps her future mother-in-law waiting for eight hours. However, I will not venture to—

(MRS. PHILLIMORE *reclines again and fades away into silence.*)

GRACE. (*Sharply and decisively.*) I do! I'm sorry I went to the expense of a silver ice-pitcher.

(MRS. PHILLIMORE *sighs.* MISS HENEAGE *keeps her temper with an effort which is obvious.*)

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

SUDLEY. (*To* MRS. PHILLIMORE.) For my part, I don't believe Mrs. Karslake means to return here or to marry Philip at all!

THOMAS. (*To* MISS HENEAGE.) Two telegrams for you, ma'am! The choir boys have had their supper.

(*Slight movement from every one;* THOMAS *steps back.*)

SUDLEY. (*Rises.*) At last we shall know!

MISS HENEAGE. From the lady! Probably!

(MISS HENEAGE *opens telegram. She reads first one at a glance, laying it on salver again with a glance at*

SUDLEY. THOMAS *passes salver to* SUDLEY, *who takes telegram.*)

GRACE. There 's a toot now.

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Feebly confused.*) I don't wish to intrude, but really I can't imagine Philip marrying at midnight.

(*As* SUDLEY *reads,* MISS HENEAGE *opens the second telegram, but does not read it.*)

SUDLEY. (*Reads.*) "Accident, auto struck" —something! "Gasoline"—did something—illegible, ah! (*Reads.*) "Home by nine forty-five! Hold the church!"

(*General movement from all.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Profoundly shocked.*) "Hold the church!" William, she still means to marry Philip! and to-night, too!

SUDLEY. It 's from Belmont Park.

GRACE. (*Making a great discovery.*) She went to the races!

MISS HENEAGE. This is from Philip! (MISS HENEAGE *reads second telegram.*) "I arrive at ten o'clock. Have dinner ready." (MISS HENEAGE *motions to* THOMAS *to withdraw. Exit* THOMAS. MISS HENEAGE *looks at her watch.*) They are both due now. (*Movement.*) What 's to be done?

(*She rises.* SUDLEY *shrugs shoulders.*)

SUDLEY. (*Rising.*) After a young woman has spent her wedding day at the races? Why, I consider that she has broken the engagement,—and when she comes, tell her so.

MISS HENEAGE. I 'll telephone Matthew. The choir boys can go home—her maid can pack her belongings—and when the lady arrives—

(*Very distant toot of an auto-horn is heard coming nearer and nearer.* GRACE *flies up stage and looks out of door.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *does not know what to do, or where to go.* SUDLEY *moves about excitedly.* MISS HENEAGE *stands ready to make herself disagreeable.*)

GRACE. (*Speaking rapidly and with excitement.*) I hear a man's voice. Cates-Darby and brother Matthew.

(*Loud toot. Laughter and voices off back heard faintly.* GRACE *looks out of the door, and leaves it rapidly.*)

MISS HENEAGE. Outrageous!

SUDLEY. Disgraceful!

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Partly rising as voices and horn are heard.*) Shocking! I shall not take any part at all, in the—eh— . . . (*She fades away.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Interrupting her.*) Don't trouble yourself.

(*Voices and laughter grow louder.* CYNTHIA'S *voice is heard.*)

(SIR WILFRID *appears at the back. He turns and waits for* CYNTHIA *and* MATTHEW. *He carries wraps. He speaks to* CYNTHIA, *who is still off of stage.* MATTHEW'S *voice is heard and* CYNTHIA'S. CYNTHIA *appears at back, followed by* MATTHEW. *As they appear,* CYNTHIA *speaks to* MATTHEW. SIR WILFRID *carries a newspaper and a parasol. The hat is the one she wore in Act Second. She is in get-up for auto. Goggles, veil, an exquisite duster in latest Paris style. All three come down rapidly. As she appears,* SUDLEY *and* MISS HENEAGE *exclaim, and there is a general movement.*)

SUDLEY. 'P on my word!

GRACE. Hah!

MISS HENEAGE. (*Rising with shocked propriety.*) Shocking!

(GRACE *remains standing above sofa.* SUDLEY *moves toward her.* MISS HENEAGE *sits down again.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *reclines on sofa.* CYNTHIA *begins to speak as soon as she appears and speaks fluently to the end.*)

CYNTHIA. No! I never was so surprised in my life, as when I strolled into the paddock and they gave me a rousing reception—old Jimmy Withers, Debt Gollup, Jack Deal, Monty Spiffles, the Governor and Buckeye. All of my old admirers! They simply fell on my neck, and, dear Matthew, what do you think I did? I turned on the water main! (*Movements and murmurs of disapprobation from the family.* MATTHEW *indicates a desire to go.*) Oh, but you can't go!

MATTHEW. I 'll return in no time!

CYNTHIA. I 'm all ready to be married. Are they ready? (MATTHEW *waves a pious, polite gesture of recognition to the family.*) I beg everybody's pardon! (*She takes off her wrap and puts it on the back of a chair.*) My goggles are so dusty, I can't see who 's who! (*To* SIR WILFRID.) Thanks! You *have* carried it well!

(*Takes parasol from* SIR WILFRID.)

SIR WILFRID. (*Aside to* CYNTHIA.) When may I—?

CYNTHIA. See you next Goodwood!

SIR WILFRID. (*Imperturbably.*) Oh, I'm coming back!

(CYNTHIA *comes down.*)

CYNTHIA. Not a bit of use in coming back! I shall be married before you get here! Ta! Ta! Goodwood!

SIR WILFRID. (*As before.*) I'm coming back.

(*He goes out quickly. More murmurs of disapprobation from family. Slight pause.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Beginning to take off her goggles, and coming down slowly.*) I do awfully apologize for being so late!

MISS HENEAGE. (*Importantly.*) Mrs. Karslake—

SUDLEY. (*Importantly.*) Ahem!

(CYNTHIA *lays down her goggles, and sees their severity.*)

CYNTHIA. Dear me! (*She surveys the flowers, and for a moment pauses.*) Oh, good heavens! Why, it looks like a smart funeral!

(MISS HENEAGE *moves; then speaks in a perfectly ordinary natural tone, but her expression is severe.* CYNTHIA *immediately realizes the state of affairs in its fullness.*)

MISS HENAGE. (*To* CYNTHIA.) After what has occurred, Mrs. Karslake—

(CYNTHIA *glances at table.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Sits at table, composed and good tempered.*) I see you got my wire —so you know where I have been.

MISS HENEAGE. To the race-course!

SUDLEY. With a rowdy Englishman.

(CYNTHIA *glances at* SUDLEY, *uncertain whether he means to be disagreeable, or whether he is only naturally so.*)

MISS HENEAGE. We concluded you desired to break the engagement!

CYNTHIA. (*Indifferently.*) No! No! Oh! No!

MISS HENEAGE. Do you intend, despite of our opinion of you—

CYNTHIA. The only opinion that would have any weight with me would be Mrs. Phillimore's.

(*She turns expectantly to* MRS. PHILLIMORE.)

MRS. PHILLIMORE. I am generally asleep at this hour, and accordingly I will not venture to express any—eh—any—actual opinion.

(*She fades away.* CYNTHIA *smiles.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Coldly.*) You smile. We simply inform you that as regards *us*, the alliance is not grateful.

CYNTHIA. (*Affecting gaiety and unconcern.*) And all this because the gasoline gave out.

SUDLEY. My patience has given out!

GRACE. So has mine. I'm going.

(*Exit* GRACE.)

SUDLEY. (*Vexed beyond civility. To* CYNTHIA.) My dear young lady: You come here, to this sacred—eh—eh—spot —altar!—odoriferous of the paddock!— speaking of Spiffles and Buckeye,—having practically eloped!—having created a scandal, and disgraced our family!

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) How does it disgrace you? Because I like to see a high-bred, clean, nervy, sweet little four-legged gee play the antelope over a hurdle!

MISS HENEAGE. Sister, it is high time that you— (*Turns to* CYNTHIA.)

CYNTHIA. (*With quiet irony.*) Mrs. Phillimore is generally asleep at this hour, and accordingly she will not venture to express—

SUDLEY. (*Spluttering with irritation.*) Enough, madam—I *venture* to—to—to— to say, you are leading a fast life.

CYNTHIA. (*With powerful intention.*) Not in this house! For six heavy weeks have I been laid away in the grave, and I've found it very slow indeed trying to keep pace with the dead!

SUDLEY. (*Despairingly.*) This comes of horses!

CYNTHIA. (*Indignant.*) Of what?

SUDLEY C-c-caring for horses!

MISS HENEAGE. (*With sublime morality.*) What Mrs. Karslake cares for is—men.

CYNTHIA. (*Angry and gay.*) What would you have me care for? The Ornithorhyncus Paradoxus? or Pithacanthropus Erectus? Oh, I refuse to take you seriously.

(SUDLEY *begins to prepare to leave; he buttons himself into respectability and his coat.*)

SUDLEY. My dear madam, I take myself seriously—and madam, I—I retract what I have brought with me (*he feels in his waistcoat pocket*) as a graceful gift,— an Egyptian scarab—a—a—sacred beetle, which once ornamented the person of a—eh—mummy.

CYNTHIA. (*Getting even with him.*) It should never be absent from your pocket, Mr. Sudley.

(SUDLEY *walks away in a rage.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*Rising. To* SUDLEY.) I've a vast mind to withdraw my—

(CYNTHIA *moves.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Interrupts; maliciously.*) Your wedding present? The little bronze cat!

MISS HENEAGE. (*Moves, angrily.*) Oh!

(*Even* MRS. PHILLIMORE *comes momentarily to life, and expresses silent indignation.*)

SUDLEY. (*Loftily.*) Sarah, I'm going.

(*Enter* PHILIP *at back with* GRACE. PHILIP *looks dusty and grim.* GRACE, *as they come in, speaks to him.* PHILIP *shakes his head. They pause up stage.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Emotionally.*) I shall go to my room! However, all I ask is that you repeat to Philip—

(*She comes suddenly on* PHILIP, *and speaks to him in a low tone.*)

SUDLEY. (*To* MISS HENEAGE, *determined to win.*) As I go out, I shall do myself the pleasure of calling a hansom for Mrs. Karslake—

(PHILIP *comes down two or three steps.*)

PHILIP. As you go out, Sudley, have a hansom called, and when it comes, get into it.

SUDLEY. (*Furious, and speaking to* PHILIP.) Eh,—eh,—my dear sir, I leave you to your fate.

(PHILIP *angrily points him the door.* SUDLEY *goes out.*)

MISS HENEAGE. (*With weight.*) Philip, you've not heard—

PHILIP. (*Interrupts.*) Everything—from Grace! (CYNTHIA *goes to the table.*) My sister has repeated your words to me—and her own! I've told her what I think of *her*.

(PHILIP *looks witheringly at* GRACE.)

GRACE. I shan't wait to hear any more.

(*Exit* GRACE, *indignantly.*)

PHILIP. Don't make it necessary for me to tell you what I think of you. (PHILIP *gives his arm to his mother.* MISS HENEAGE *goes towards the door.*) Mother, with your permission, I desire to be alone. I expect both you and Grace, Sarah, to be dressed and ready for the ceremony a half hour from now.

(*As* PHILIP *and* MRS. PHILLIMORE *are about to cross,* MISS HENEAGE *speaks.*)

MISS HENEAGE. I shall come or not as I see fit. And let me add, my dear nephew, that a fool at forty is a fool indeed.

(*Exit* MISS HENEAGE, *high and mighty, and much pleased with her quotation.*)

MRS. PHILLIMORE. (*Stupid and weary as usual, to* PHILIP, *as he leads her to the door.*) My dear son—I won't venture to express—

(CYNTHIA *goes to the table.*)

PHILIP. (*Soothing a silly mother.*) No, mother, don't! But I shall expect you, of course, at the ceremony. (*Exit* MRS. PHILLIMORE. PHILIP *takes the tone and assumes the attitude of the injured husband.*) It is proper for me to tell you that I followed you to Belmont. I am aware—I know with whom—in fact, *I know all!* (*Pauses. He indicates the whole censorious universe.*) And now let me assure you—I am the last man in the world to be jilted on the very eve of —of—everything with you. I won't be jilted. (CYNTHIA *is silent.*) You understand? I propose to marry you. I won't be made ridiculous.

CYNTHIA. (*Glancing at* PHILIP.) Philip, I did n't mean to make you—

PHILIP. Why, then, did you run off to Belmont Park with that fellow?

CYNTHIA. Philip, I—eh—

PHILIP. (*Sitting at the table.*) What motive? What reason? On our wedding day? Why did you do it?

CYNTHIA. I'll tell you the truth. I was bored.

PHILIP. Bored? In my company?

(PHILIP, *in a gesture, gives up.*)

CYNTHIA. I was bored, and then—and besides, Sir Wilfrid asked me to go.

PHILIP. Exactly, and that was why you went. Cynthia, when you promised to marry me, you told me you had forever done with love. You agreed that marriage was the rational coming together of two people.

CYNTHIA. I know, I know!

PHILIP. Do you believe that now?

CYNTHIA. I don't know what I believe! My brain is in a whirl! But, Philip, I am beginning to be—I'm afraid—yes, I am afraid that one can't just select a great and good man (*she indicates him*) and say: I will be happy with him.

PHILIP. (*With dignity.*) I don't see why not. You must assuredly do one or the other: You must either let your heart choose or your head select.

CYNTHIA. (*Gravely.*) No, there's a third scheme; Sir Wilfrid explained the theory to me. A woman should marry whenever she has a whim for the man, and then leave the rest to the man. Do you see?

PHILIP. (*Furious.*) Do I see? Have I ever seen anything else? Marry for

whim! That's the New York idea of marriage.

CYNTHIA. (*Giving a cynical opinion.*) New York ought to know.

PHILIP. Marry for whim and leave the rest to the divorce court! Marry for whim and leave the rest to the man. That was the former Mrs. Phillimore's idea. Only she spelled "whim" differently; she omitted the "w." (*He rises in his anger.*) And now you—*you* take up with this preposterous—(CYNTHIA *moves uneasily.*) But, nonsense! It's impossible! A woman of your mental calibre— No. Some obscure, primitive, female *feeling* is at work corrupting your better judgment! What is it you *feel?*

CYNTHIA. Philip, you never felt like a fool, did you?

PHILIP. No, never.

CYNTHIA. (*Politely.*) I thought not.

PHILIP. No, but whatever your feelings, I conclude you are ready to marry me.

CYNTHIA. (*Uneasy.*) Of course, I came back. I am here, am I not?

PHILIP. You are ready to marry me?

CYNTHIA. (*Twisting in the coils.*) But you haven't had your dinner.

PHILIP. Do I understand you refuse?

CYNTHIA. Couldn't we defer—?

PHILIP. You refuse?

CYNTHIA. (*A slight pause; trapped and seeing no way out.*) No, I said I'd marry you. I'm a woman of my word. I will.

PHILIP. (*Triumphant.*) Ah! Very good, then. Run to your room. (CYNTHIA *turns to* PHILIP.) Throw something over you. In a half hour I'll expect you here! And, Cynthia, my dear, remember! I cannot cuculate like a wood pigeon, but—I esteem you!

CYNTHIA. (*Hopelessly.*) I think I'll go, Philip.

PHILIP. I may not be fitted to play the love-bird, but—

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) I think I'll go, Philip.

PHILIP. I'll expect you,—in half an hour.

CYNTHIA. (*With leaden despair.*) Yes.

PHILIP. And, Cynthia, don't think any more about that fellow, Cates-Darby.

CYNTHIA. (*Amazed and disgusted by his misapprehension.*) No.

(*Exit* CYNTHIA.)

(THOMAS *enters from the opposite door.*)

PHILIP. (*Not seeing* THOMAS *and clumsily defiant.*) And if I had that fellow, Cates-Darby, in the dock—!

THOMAS. Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby.

PHILIP. Sir what—what—wh-who?

(*Enter* SIR WILFRID, *in evening dress.* PHILIP *looks* SIR WILFRID *in the face and speaks to* THOMAS.)

Tell Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby I am not at home to him.

(THOMAS *embarrassed.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Undaunted.*) My dear Lord Eldon—

PHILIP. (*Speaks to* THOMAS, *as before.*) Show the gentleman the door.

(*Pause.* SIR WILFRID *glances at door with a significant gesture.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Goes to the door, examines it and returns to* PHILIP.) Eh,—I admire the door, my boy! Fine, old carved mahogany panel; but don't ask me to leave by it, for Mrs. Karslake made me promise I'd come, and that's why I'm here. (THOMAS *exits.*)

PHILIP. Sir, you are—impudent—!

SIR WILFRID. (*Interrupting.*) Ah, you put it all in a nutshell, don't you?

PHILIP. To show your face here, after practically eloping with my wife!

SIR WILFRID. (*Pretending ignorance.*) When were you married?

PHILIP. We're as good as married.

SIR WILFRID. Oh, pooh, pooh! You can't tell me that grace before soup is as good as a dinner! (*He takes cigar-case out.*)

PHILIP. Sir—I—demand—

SIR WILFRID. (*Calmly carrying the situation.*) Mrs. Karslake is *not* married. *That's* why I'm here. I am here for the same purpose *you* are; to ask Mrs. Karslake to be my wife.

PHILIP. Are you in your senses?

SIR WILFRID. (*Touching up his American cousin in his pet vanity.*) Come, come, Judge—you Americans have no sense of humor. (*He takes a small jewel-case from his pocket.*) There's my regards for the lady—and (*reasonably*), if I must go, I will. Of course, I would like to see her, but—if it isn't your American custom—

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

THOMAS. Mr. Karslake.

SIR WILFRID. Oh, well, I say; if he can come, I can!

(*Enter* JOHN KARSLAKE *in evening dress, carrying a large and very smart bride's*

bouquet which he hands to PHILIP. PHILIP *takes it because he is n't up to dropping it, but gets it out of his hands as soon as he can.* PHILIP *is transfixed;* JOHN *comes to the front of the stage. Deep down he is feeling wounded and unhappy. But, as he knows his coming to the ceremony on whatever pretext is a social outrage, he carries it off by assuming an air of its being the most natural thing in the world. He controls the expression of his deeper emotion, but the pressure of this keeps his face grave, and he speaks with force.)*

JOHN. My compliments to the bride, Judge.

PHILIP. (*Angry.*) And you, too, have the effrontery?

SIR WILFRID. There you are!

JOHN. (*Pretending ease.*) Oh, call it friendship— (THOMAS *goes out.*)

PHILIP. (*Puts bouquet on table. Ironically.*) I suppose Mrs. Karslake—

JOHN. She wagered me I would n't give her away, and of course—

(*Throughout this scene* JOHN *hides the emotions he will not show behind a daring irony. He has* PHILIP *on his left, walking about in a fury;* SIR WILFRID *sits on the edge of the table, gay and undisturbed.*)

PHILIP. (*Taking a step toward* JOHN.) You will oblige me—both of you—by immediately leaving—

JOHN. (*Smiling and going to* PHILIP.) Oh, come, come, Judge—suppose I *am* here? Who has a better right to attend his wife's obsequies! Certainly, I come as a mourner—for *you!*

SIR WILFRID. I say, is it the custom?

JOHN. No, no—of course it 's not the custom, no. But we 'll make it the custom. After all,—what 's a divorced wife among friends?

PHILIP. Sir, your humor is strained!

JOHN. Humor,—Judge?

PHILIP. It is, sir, and I 'll not be bantered! Your both being here is—it is—gentlemen, there is a decorum which the stars in their courses do not violate.

JOHN. Now, Judge, never you mind what the stars do in their divorces! Get down to earth of the present day. Rufus Choate and Daniel Webster are dead. You must be modern. You must let peroration and poetry alone! Come along now. Why should n't I give the lady away?

SIR WILFRID. Hear! Hear! Oh, I beg your pardon!

JOHN. And why should n't we both be here? American marriage is a new thing. We 've got to strike the pace, and the only trouble is, Judge, that the judiciary have so messed the thing up that a man can't be sure he *is* married until he 's divorced. It 's a sort of marry-go-round, to be sure! But let it go at that! Here we all are, and we 're ready to marry my wife to you, and start her on her way to him!

PHILIP. (*Brought to a standstill.*) Good Lord! Sir, you cannot trifle with monogamy!

JOHN. Now, now, Judge, monogamy is just as extinct as knee-breeches. The new woman has a new idea, and the new idea is—well, it 's just the opposite of the old Mormon one. Their idea is one man, ten wives and a hundred children. Our idea is one woman, a hundred husbands and one child.

PHILIP. Sir, this is polyandry.

JOHN. Polyandry? A hundred to one it 's polyandry; and that 's it, Judge! Uncle Sam has established consecutive polyandry,—but there 's got to be an interval between husbands! The fact is, Judge, the modern American marriage is like a wire fence. The woman 's the wire—the posts are the husbands. (*He indicates himself, and then* SIR WILFRID *and* PHILIP.) One—two—three! And if you cast your eye over the future you can count them, post after post, up hill, down dale, all the way to Dakota!

PHILIP. All very amusing, sir, but the fact remains—

JOHN. (*Going to* PHILIP. PHILIP *moves away.*) Now, now, Judge, I like you. But you 're asleep; you 're living in the dark ages. You want to call up Central. "Hello, Central! Give me the present time, 1906, New York!"

SIR WILFRID. Of course you do, and—there you are!

PHILIP. (*Heavily.*) There I am not, sir! And—(*To* JOHN) as for Mr. Karslake's ill-timed jocosity,—sir, in the future—

SIR WILFRID. Oh, hang the future!

PHILIP. I begin to hope, Sir Wilfrid, that in the future I shall have the pleasure of hanging you! (*To* JOHN.) And as to you, sir, your insensate idea of giving away your own—your former—my—your—oh! Good Lord! This is a nightmare! (*He turns to go in despair.*)

(*Enter* MATTHEW, *who, seeing* PHILIP, *speaks as he comes in from door.*)

MATTHEW (*To* PHILIP.) My dear brother, Aunt Sarah Heneage refuses to give Mrs. Karslake away, unless you yourself,—eh—

PHILIP. (*As he exits.*) No more! I'll attend to the matter!

(*Exit. The choir boys are heard practicing in the next room.*)

MATTHEW. (*Mopping his brow.*) How do you both do? My aunt has made me very warm. (*He rings the bell.*) You hear our choir practicing—sweet angel boys! Hm! Hm! Some of the family will not be present. I am very fond of you, Mr. Karslake, and I think it admirably Christian of you to have waived your—eh—your—eh—that is, now that I look at it more narrowly, let me say, that in the excitement of pleasurable anticipation, I forgot, Karslake, that your presence might occasion remark—

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

Thomas! I left, in the hall, a small handbag or satchel containing my surplice.

THOMAS. Yes, sir. Ahem!

MATTHEW. You must really find the handbag at once.

(THOMAS *turns to go, when he stops startled.*)

THOMAS. Yes, sir. (*Announcing in consternation.*) Mrs. Vida Phillimore.

(*Enter* VIDA PHILLIMORE, *in full evening dress. She steps gently to* MATTHEW.)

MATTHEW. (*Always piously serene.*) Ah, my dear child! Now this is just as it should be! That is, eh—(*He comes to the front of the stage with her; she pointedly looks away from* SIR WILFRID.) That is, when I come to think of it—your presence might be deemed inauspicious.

VIDA. But, my dear Matthew,—I had to come. (*Aside to him.*) I have a reason for being here.

(THOMAS *enters.*)

MATTHEW. But, my dear child—

THOMAS. (*With sympathetic intention.*) Sir, Mr. Phillimore wishes to have your assistance, sir—with Miss Heneage *immediately!*

MATTHEW. Ah! (*To* VIDA.) One moment! I'll return. (*To* THOMAS.) Have you found the bag with my surplice?

(*He goes out with* THOMAS, *speaking.* SIR WILFRID *comes to* VIDA. JOHN *watches the door.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*To* VIDA.) You're just the person I most want to see!

VIDA. (*With affected iciness.*) Oh, no, Sir Wilfrid, Cynthia isn't here yet! (*Crossing to table.* JOHN *comes toward her and she speaks to him, with obvious sweetness.*) Jack, dear, I never was so ravished to see any one.

SIR WILFRID. (*Taken aback.*) By Jove!

VIDA. (*Very sweet.*) I knew I should find you here!

JOHN. (*Annoyed but civil.*) Now don't do that!

VIDA. (*As before.*) Jack!

(*They sit down.*)

JOHN. (*Civil but plain spoken.*) Don't do it!

VIDA. (*In a voice dripping with honey.*) Do what, Jack?

JOHN. Touch me with your voice! I have troubles enough of my own.

(*He sits not far from her, the table is between them.*)

VIDA. And I know *who* your troubles are! Cynthia!

(*From this moment* VIDA *gives up* JOHN *as an object of the chase and lets him into her other game.*)

JOHN. I hate her. I don't know why I came.

VIDA. You came, dear, because you could n't stay away—you're in love with her.

JOHN. All right, Vida, what I feel may be *love*—but all I can say is, if I could get even with Cynthia Karslake—

VIDA. You can, dear—it 's as easy as powdering one's face; all you have to do is to be too nice to me!

JOHN. (*Looks inquiringly at* VIDA.) Eh!

VIDA. Don't you realize she 's jealous of you? Why did she come to my house this morning? She 's jealous—and all you have to do—

JOHN. If I can make her wince, I'll make love to you till the Heavenly cows come home!

VIDA. Well, you see, my dear, if you make love to me it will (*she delicately indicates* SIR WILFRID) cut both ways at once!

JOHN. Eh,—what! Not Cates-Darby? (*Starting.*) Is that Cynthia?

VIDA. Now don't get rattled and forget to make love to me.

JOHN. I've got the jumps. (*Trying to accept her instructions.*) Vida, I adore you.

VIDA. Oh, you must be more convincing; that won't do at all.

JOHN. (*Listening.*) Is that she now?

(*Enter* MATTHEW, *who goes to the inner room.*)

VIDA. It's Matthew. And, Jack, dear, you'd best get the hang of it before Cynthia comes. You might tell me all about your divorce. That's a sympathetic subject. Were you able to undermine it?

JOHN. No. I've got a wire from my lawyer this morning. The divorce holds. She's a free woman. She can marry whom she likes. (*The organ is heard, very softly played.*) Is that Cynthia?

(*He rises quickly.*)

VIDA. It's the organ!

JOHN. (*Overwhelmingly excited.*) By George! I should never have come! I think I'll go.

(*He crosses to go to the door.*)

VIDA. (*She rises and follows him remonstratingly.*) When I need you?

JOHN. I can't stand it.

VIDA. Oh, but, Jack—

JOHN. Good-night!

VIDA. I feel quite ill. (*Seeing that she must play her last card to keep him, pretends to faintness; sways and falls into his arms.*) Oh!

JOHN. (*In a rage, but beaten.*) I believe you're putting up a fake.

(*The organ swells as* CYNTHIA *enters sweepingly, dressed in full evening dress for the wedding ceremony.* JOHN, *not knowing what to do, holds* VIDA *up as a horrid necessity.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Speaking as she comes on, to* MATTHEW.) Here I am. Ridiculous to make it a conventional thing, you know. Come in on the swell of the music, and all that, just as if I'd never been married before. Where's Philip?

(*She looks for* PHILIP *and sees* JOHN *with* VIDA *in his arms. She stops short.*)

JOHN. (*Uneasy and embarrassed.*) A glass of water! I beg your pardon, Mrs. Karslake— (*The organ plays on.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Ironical and calm.*) Vida!

JOHN. She has fainted.

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) Fainted? (*Without pause.*) Dear, dear, dear, terrible! So she has. (SIR WILFRID *takes flowers from a vase and prepares to sprinkle* VIDA'S *forehead with the water it contains.*) No, no, not her forehead, Sir Wilfrid, her frock! Sprinkle her best Paquin! If it's a real faint, she will not come to!

VIDA. (*As her Paris importation is about to suffer comes to her senses.*) I almost fainted.

CYNTHIA. Almost!

VIDA. (*Using the stock phrase as a matter of course, and reviving rapidly.*) Where am I? (JOHN *glances at* CYNTHIA *sharply.*) Oh, the bride! I beg every one's pardon. Cynthia, at a crisis like this, I simply could n't stay away from Philip!

CYNTHIA. Stay away from Philip?

(JOHN *and* CYNTHIA *exchange glances.*)

VIDA. Your arm, Jack; and lead me where there is air.

(JOHN *and* VIDA *go into the further room;* JOHN *stands left of her. The organ stops.* SIR WILFRID *comes down. He and* CYNTHIA *are practically alone on the stage.* JOHN *and* VIDA *are barely within sight. You first see him take her fan and give her air; then he picks up a book and reads from it to her.*)

SIR WILFRID. I've come back.

CYNTHIA. (*To* SIR WILFRID.) Asks for air and goes to the green-house. (CYNTHIA *crosses stage.* SIR WILFRID *offers her a seat.*) I know why you are here. It's that intoxicating little whim you suppose me to have for you. My regrets! But the whim's gone flat! Yes, yes, my gasoline days are over. I'm going to be garaged for good. However, I'm glad you're here; you take the edge off—

SIR WILFRID. Mr. Phillimore?

CYNTHIA. (*Sharply.*) No, Karslake. I'm just waiting to say the words

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

"love, honor and obey" to Phillimore—(*looks up back*) and *at* Karslake! (CYNTHIA *sees* THOMAS.) What is it? Mr. Phillimore?

THOMAS. Mr. Phillimore will be down in a few minutes, ma'am. He's very sorry, ma'am, (*lowers his voice and comes nearer* CYNTHIA, *mindful of the respectabilities*) but there's a button off his waistcoat.

CYNTHIA. (*Excited, with irony. Rising.*) Button off his waistcoat!

(*Exit* THOMAS.)

SIR WILFRID. (*Delightedly.*) Ah! So much the better for me. (CYNTHIA *looks up back.*) Now, then, never mind those two! (CYNTHIA *moves restlessly.*) Sit down.

CYNTHIA. I can't.

SIR WILFRID. You're as nervous as—

CYNTHIA. Nervous! Of course I'm nervous! So would you be nervous if you'd had had a runaway and smash up, and you were going to try it again. (*Looking up back.* SIR WILFRID *is uneasy.*) And if some one does n't do away with those calla lilies—the odor makes me faint! (SIR WILFRID *moves.*) No, it's not the lilies! It's the orange blossoms!

SIR WILFRID. Orange blossoms.

CYNTHIA. The flowers that grow on the tree that hangs over the abyss. (SIR WILFRID *gets the vase of orange blossoms.*) They smell of six o'clock in the evening. When Philip's fallen asleep, and the little boys are crying the winners outside, and I'm crying inside, and dying inside and outside and everywhere.

(SIR WILFRID *comes down.*)

SIR WILFRID. Sorry to disappoint you. They're artificial. (CYNTHIA *shrugs her shoulders.*) That's it! They're emblematic of artificial domesticity! And I'm here to help you balk it. (*He sits;* CYNTHIA *half rises and looks toward* JOHN *and* VIDA.) Keep still now, I've a lot to say to you. Stop looking—

CYNTHIA. Do you think I can listen to you make love to me when the man who —who—whom I most despise in all the world, is reading poetry to the woman who—who got me into the fix I'm in!

SIR WILFRID. (*Leaning over the chair in which she sits.*) What do you want to look at 'em for? (CYNTHIA *moves.*) Let 'em be and listen to me! Sit down; for damme, I'm determined.

(CYNTHIA *at the table.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Half to herself.*) I won't look at them! I won't think of them. Beasts!

(SIR WILFRID *interposes between her and her view of* JOHN.)

(*Enter* THOMAS.)

SIR WILFRID. Now, then— (*He sits.*)

CYNTHIA. Those two *here!* It's just as if Adam and Eve should invite the snake to their golden wedding. (*She sees* THOMAS.) What is it, what's the matter?

THOMAS. Mr. Phillimore's excuses, ma'am. In a very short time—

(THOMAS *exits.*)

SIR WILFRID. I'm on to you! You hoped for more buttons!

CYNTHIA. I'm dying of the heat; fan me. (SIR WILFRID *fans* CYNTHIA.)

SIR WILFRID. Heat! No! You're dying because you're ignorin' nature. Certainly you are! You're marryin' Phillimore! (CYNTHIA *appears faint.*) Can't ignore nature, Mrs. Karslake. Yes, you are; you're forcin' your feelin's. (CYNTHIA *glances at him.*) And what you want to do is to let yourself go a bit—up anchor and sit tight! I'm no seaman, but that's the idea! (CYNTHIA *moves and shakes her head.*) So just throw the reins on nature's neck, jump this fellow Phillimore and marry me!

(*He leans over to* CYNTHIA.)

CYNTHIA. (*Naturally, but with irritation.*) You propose to me here, at a moment like this? When I'm on the last lap—just in sight of the goal—the gallows—the halter—the altar, I don't know what its name is! No, I won't have you! (*Looking toward* KARSLAKE *and* VIDA.) And I won't have you stand near me! I won't have you talking to me in a low tone! (*As before.*) Stand over there—stand where you are.

SIR WILFRID. I say—

CYNTHIA. I can hear you—I'm listening!

SIR WILFRID. Well, don't look so hurried and worried. You've got buttons and buttons of time. And now my offer. You have n't yet said you would—

CYNTHIA. Marry you? I don't even know you!

SIR WILFRID. (*Feeling sure of being accepted.*) Oh,—tell you all about myself. I'm no duke in a pickle o' debts, d'ye see? I can marry where I like. Some o' my countrymen are rotters, ye know. They'd marry a monkey, if poppa-up-the-tree had a corner in cocoanuts! And they do marry some queer ones, y' know.

(CYNTHIA *looks up, exclaims and turns.*—SIR WILFRID *turns.*)

CYNTHIA. Do they?

SIR WILFRID. Oh, rather. That's what's giving your heiresses such a bad name lately. If a fellah's in debt he can't pick and choose, and then he swears that American gals are awfully fine lookers, but they're no good when it comes to

continuin' the race! Fair dolls in the drawin'-room, but no good in the nursery.

CYNTHIA. (*Thinking of* JOHN *and* VIDA *and nothing else.*) I can see Vida in the nursery.

SIR WILFRID. You understand when you want a brood mare, you don't choose a Kentucky mule.

CYNTHIA. I think I see one.

SIR WILFRID. Well, that 's what they 're saying over there. They say your gals run to talk (*He plainly remembers* VIDA'S *volubility.*), and I have seen gals here that would chat life into a wooden Indian! That 's what you Americans call being clever.—All brains and no stuffin'! In fact, some of your American gals are the nicest boys I ever met.

CYNTHIA. So that 's what you think?

SIR WILFRID. Not a bit what *I* think—what my countrymen think!

CYNTHIA. Why are you telling me?

SIR WILFRID. Oh, just explaining my character. I 'm the sort that can pick and choose—and what I want is heart.

CYNTHIA. (*Always having* VIDA *and* JOHN *in mind.*) No more heart than a dragon-fly!

(*The organ begins to play softly.*)

SIR WILFRID. That 's it, dragon-fly. Cold as stone and never stops buzzing about and showin' off her colors. It 's that American dragon-fly girl that I 'm afraid of, because, d' ye see, I don't know what an American expects when he marries; yes, but you 're not listening!

CYNTHIA. I am listening. I am!

SIR WILFRID. (*Speaking directly to her.*) An Englishman, ye see, when he marries expects three things; love, obedience and five children.

CYNTHIA. Three things! I make it seven!

SIR WILFRID. Yes, my dear, but the point is, will you be mistress of Traynham?

CYNTHIA. (*Who has only half listened to him.*) No, Sir Wilfrid, thank you, I won't. (*She turns to see* JOHN *crossing the drawing-room at back, with* VIDA, *apparently absorbed in what she says.*) It 's outrageous!

SIR WILFRID. Eh? Why, you 're cryin'!

CYNTHIA. (*Almost sobbing.*) I am not.

SIR WILFRID. You 're not crying because you 're in love with me?

CYNTHIA. I 'm not crying—or if I am, I 'm crying because I love my country. It 's a disgrace to America—cast-off husbands and wives getting together in a parlor and playing tag under a palm-tree.

(JOHN *with intention and determined to stab* CYNTHIA, *kisses* VIDA'S *hand.*)

SIR WILFRID. Eh! Oh! I 'm damned! (*To* CYNTHIA.) What do you think that means?

CYNTHIA. I don't doubt it means a wedding here, at once—after mine!

(VIDA *and* JOHN *come down.*)

VIDA. (*Affecting an impossible intimacy to wound* CYNTHIA *and tantalize* SIR WILFRID.) Hush, Jack—I 'd much rather no one should know anything about it until it 's all over!

CYNTHIA. (*Starts and looks at* SIR WILFRID.) What did I tell you?

VIDA. (*To* CYNTHIA.) Oh, my dear, he 's asked me to champagne and lobster at *your* house—his house! Matthew is coming! (CYNTHIA *starts, but controls herself.*) And you 're to come, Sir Wilfrid. (VIDA *speaks, intending to convey the idea of a sudden marriage ceremony.*) Of course, my dear, I would like to wait for your wedding, but something rather—rather important to me is to take place, and I know you 'll excuse me. (*Organ stops.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Piqued at being forgotten.*) All very neat, but you have n't given me a chance, even.

VIDA. Chance? You 're not serious?

SIR WILFRID. I am!

VIDA. (*Striking while the iron is hot.*) I 'll give you a minute to offer yourself.

SIR WILFRID. Eh?

VIDA. Sixty seconds from now.

SIR WILFRID. (*Uncertain.*) There 's such a thing as bein' silly.

VIDA. (*Calm and determined.*) Fifty seconds left.

SIR WILFRID. I take you—count fair. (*He hands her his watch and goes to where* CYNTHIA *stands.*) I say, Mrs. Karslake—

CYNTHIA. (*Overwhelmed with grief and emotion.*) They 're engaged; they 's going to be married to-night, over champagne and lobster at my house!

SIR WILFRID. Will you consider your—

CYNTHIA. (*Hastily, to get rid of him.*) No, no, no, no! Thank you, Sir Wilfrid, I will not.

SIR WILFRID. (*Calm and not to be laid low.*) Thanks awfully. (*Crosses to* VIDA. CYNTHIA *walks away.*) Mrs. Phillimore—

VIDA. (*She gives him back his watch.*) Too late! (*To* KARSLAKE.) Jack, dear, we must be off.

SIR WILFRID. (*Standing and making a general appeal for information.*) I say, is it the custom for American girls—that sixty seconds or too late? Look here! Not a bit too late. I'll take you around to Jack Karslake's, and I'm going to ask you the same old question again, you know. (*To* VIDA.) By Jove, you know in your country it's the pace that kills.

(*Exeunt* SIR WILFRID *and* VIDA.)

JOHN. (*Gravely to* CYNTHIA, *who comes to the front of the stage.*) Good-night, Mrs. Karslake, I'm going; I'm sorry I came.

CYNTHIA. Sorry? Why are you sorry? (JOHN *looks at her; she winces a little.*) You've got what you wanted. (*Pause.*) I would n't mind your marrying Vida—

JOHN. (*Gravely.*) Oh, would n't you?

CYNTHIA. But I don't think you showed good taste in engaging yourselves *here.*

JOHN. Of course, I should have preferred a garden of roses and plenty of twilight.

CYNTHIA. (*Rushing into speech.*) I'll tell you what you *have* done—you've thrown yourself away! A woman like that! No head, no heart! All languor and loose—loose frocks—she's the typical, worst thing America can do! She's the regular American marriage worm!

JOHN. I have known others—

CYNTHIA. (*Quickly.*) Not me. I'm not a patch on that woman. Do you know anything about her life? Do you know the things she did to Philip? Kept him up every night of his life—forty days out of every thirty—and then, without his knowing it, put brandy in his coffee to make him lively at breakfast.

JOHN. (*Banteringly.*) I begin to think she is just the woman—

CYNTHIA. (*Unable to quiet her jealousy.*) She is *not* the woman for *you!* A man with your bad temper—your airs of authority—your assumption of—of—everything. What you need is a good, old-fashioned, bread poultice woman!

(CYNTHIA *comes to a full stop and faces* JOHN.)

JOHN. (*Sharply.*) Can't say I've had any experience of the good old-fashioned bread poultice.

CYNTHIA. I don't care what you say! If you marry Vida Phillimore—you shan't do it. (*Tears of rage choking her.*) No, I liked your father and for *his* sake, I'll see that his son does n't make a donkey of himself a second time.

JOHN. (*Too angry to be amused.*) Oh, I thought I was divorced. I begin to feel as if I had you on my hands still.

CYNTHIA. You have! You shall have! If you attempt to marry her, I'll follow you—and I'll find her—I'll tell Vida—(*He turns to her.*) I will. I'll tell Vida just what sort of a dance you led me.

JOHN. (*Quickly on her last word but speaking gravely.*) Indeed! Will you? And *why* do you care what happens to me?

CYNTHIA. (*Startled by his tone.*) I—I—ah—

JOHN. (*Insistently and with a faint hope.*) *Why* do you *care?*

CYNTHIA. I don't. Not in your sense—

JOHN. How dare you then pretend—

CYNTHIA. I don't pretend.

JOHN. (*Interrupting her; proud, serious and strong.*) How dare you look me in the face with the eyes that I once kissed, and pretend the least regard for me? (CYNTHIA *recoils and looks away. Her own feelings are revealed to her clearly for the first time.*) I begin to understand our American women now. Fireflies—and the fire they gleam with is so cold that a midge could n't warm his heart at it, let alone a man. You're not of the same race as a man! You married me for nothing, divorced me for nothing, because you *are* nothing!

CYNTHIA. (*Wounded to the heart.*) Jack! What are you saying?

JOHN. (*With unrestrained emotion.*) What,—you feigning an interest in me, feigning a lie—and in five minutes—(*Gesture indicating altar.*) Oh, you've taught me the trick of your sex—you're the woman who's not a woman!

CYNTHIA. (*Weakly.*) You're saying terrible things to me.

JOHN. (*Low and with intensity.*) You have n't been divorced from me long enough to forget—what you should be ashamed to remember.

CYNTHIA. (*Unable to face him and pretending not to understand him.*) I don't know what you mean.

JOHN. (*More forcibly and with manly emotion.*) You're not able to forget me! You know you're not able to forget me; ask yourself if you are able to forget me, and when your heart, such as it is, answers "no," then—(*The organ is plainly heard.*) Well, then, prance

gaily up to the altar and marry that, if you can!

(*He exits quickly.* CYNTHIA *crosses to arm-chair and sinks into it. She trembles as if she were overdone. Voices are heard speaking in the next room. Enter* MATTHEW *and* MISS HENEAGE. *Enter* PHILIP. CYNTHIA *is so sunk in the chair they do not see her.* MISS HENEAGE *goes up to sofa back and waits. They all are dressed for an evening reception and* PHILIP *in the traditional bridegroom's rig.*)

MATTHEW. (*As he enters.*) I am sure you will do your part, Sarah—in a spirit of Christian decorum. (*To* PHILIP.) It was impossible to find my surplice, Philip, but the more informal the better.

PHILIP. (*With pompous responsibility.*) Where's Cynthia?

(MATTHEW *gives glance around room.*)

MATTHEW. Ah, here's the choir! (*He goes to meet it. Choir boys come in very orderly; divide and take their places, an even number on each side of the altar of flowers.* MATTHEW *vaguely superintends.* PHILIP *gets in the way of the bell. Moves out of the way. Enter* THOMAS.) Thomas, I directed you—One moment, if you please.

(*He indicates table and chairs.* THOMAS *hastens to move the chairs and the table against the wall.* PHILIP *comes down.*)

PHILIP. (*Looking for her.*) Where's Cynthia?

(CYNTHIA *rises.* PHILIP *sees her when she moves and crosses toward her, but stops. The organ stops.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Faintly.*) Here I am.

(MATTHEW *comes down. The organ plays softly.*)

MATTHEW. (*Coming to* CYNTHIA.) Ah, my very dear Cynthia, I knew there was something. Let me tell you the words of the hymn I have chosen:

"Enduring love; sweet end of strife!
Oh, bless this happy man and wife!"

I'm afraid you feel—eh—eh!

CYNTHIA. (*Desperately calm.*) I feel awfully queer—I think I need a scotch.

(*The organ stops.* PHILIP *remains uneasily at a little distance.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *and* GRACE *enter back slowly, as cheerfully as if they were going to hear the funeral service read. They remain near the doorway.*)

MATTHEW. Really, my dear, in the pomp and vanity—I mean—ceremony of this—this unique occasion, there should be sufficient exhilaration.

CYNTHIA. (*As before.*) But there is n't!

(*She sits.*)

MATTHEW. I don't think my Bishop would approve of—eh—anything *before!*

CYNTHIA. (*Too agitated to know how much she is moved.*) I feel very queer.

MATTHEW. (*Piously sure that everything is for the best.*) My dear child—

CYNTHIA. However, I suppose there's nothing for it—now—but—to—to—

MATTHEW. Courage!

CYNTHIA. (*Desperate and with sudden explosion.*) Oh, don't speak to me. I feel as if I'd been eating gunpowder, and the very first word of the wedding service would set it off!

MATTHEW. My dear, your indisposition is the voice of nature.

(CYNTHIA *speaks more rapidly and with growing excitement,* MATTHEW *going toward the choir boys.*)

CYNTHIA. Ah,—that's it—nature! (MATTHEW *shakes his head.*) I've a great mind to throw the reins on nature's neck.

PHILIP. Matthew!

(*He moves to take his stand for the ceremony.*)

MATTHEW. (*Looking at* PHILIP. *To* CYNTHIA.) Philip is ready.

(PHILIP *comes down. The organ plays the wedding march.*)

CYNTHIA. (*To herself, as if at bay.*) Ready? Ready? Ready?

MATTHEW. Cynthia, you will take Miss Heneage's arm. (MISS HENEAGE *comes down near table.*) Sarah! (MATTHEW *indicates to* MISS HENEAGE *where* CYNTHIA *is.* MISS HENEAGE *advances a step or two.* MATTHEW *goes up and speaks in a low voice to choir.*) Now please don't forget, my boys. When I raise my hands so, you begin, "Enduring love, sweet end of strife." (CYNTHIA *has risen. On the table is her long lace cloak. She stands by this table.* MATTHEW *assumes sacerdotal importance and takes his position inside the altar of flowers.*) Ahem! Philip! (*He indicates to* PHILIP *that he take his position.*) Sarah! (CYNTHIA *breathes fast, and supports herself on table.* MISS HENEAGE *goes toward her and stands for*

a moment looking at CYNTHIA.) The ceremony will now begin.

(*The organ plays Mendelssohn's wedding march.* CYNTHIA *turns and faces* MISS HENEAGE. MISS HENEAGE *comes to* CYNTHIA *slowly, and extends her hand in her readiness to lead the bride to the altar.*)

MISS HENEAGE. Mrs. Karslake!

PHILIP. Ahem!

(MATTHEW *steps forward two or three steps.* CYNTHIA *stands turned to stone.*)

MATTHEW. My dear Cynthia. I request you—to take your place. (CYNTHIA *moves one or two steps across as if to go up to the altar. She takes* MISS HENEAGE'S *hand and slowly they walk toward* MATTHEW.) Your husband to be—is ready, the ring is in my pocket. I have only to ask you the—eh—necessary questions—and—eh—all will be blissfully over in a moment.

(*The organ is louder.*)

CYNTHIA. (*At this moment, just as she reaches* PHILIP, *she stops, faces round, looks him,* MATTHEW *and the rest in the face and cries out in despair.*) Thomas! Call a hansom! (THOMAS *exits and leaves door open.* MISS HENEAGE *crosses the stage.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *rises.* CYNTHIA *grasps her cloak on table.* PHILIP *turns and* CYNTHIA *comes forward and stops.*) I can't, Philip—I can't. (*Whistle of hansom is heard off; the organ stops.*) It is simply a case of throwing the reins on nature's neck—up anchor—and sit tight! (MATTHEW *crosses to* CYNTHIA.) Matthew, don't come near me! Yes, yes, I distrust you. It 's your business, and you 'd marry me if you could.

PHILIP. (*Watching her in dismay as she throws on her cloak.*) Where are you going?

CYNTHIA. I 'm going to Jack.

PHILIP. What for?

CYNTHIA. To stop his marrying Vida. I 'm blowing a hurricane inside, a horrible, happy hurricane! I know myself—I know what 's the matter with me. If I married you and Miss Heneage—what 's the use of talking about it—he must n't marry that woman. He shan't. (CYNTHIA *has now all her wraps on; goes up rapidly. To* PHILIP.) Sorry! So long! Good-night and see you later.

(CYNTHIA *goes to door rapidly;* MATTHEW, *in absolute amazement, throws up his arms.* PHILIP *is rigid.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *sinks into a chair.* MISS HENEAGE *is supercilious and unmoved.* GRACE *is the same. The choir, at* MATTHEW'S *gesture, mistakes it for the concerted signal, and bursts lustily into the Epithalamis.*

"Enduring love—sweet end of strife!
Oh, bless this happy man and wife!"

ACT FOURTH.

The scene is laid in JOHN KARSLAKE'S *study and smoking-room. There is a bay window on the right. A door on the right leads to stairs, and the front door of house, while a door at the back leads to the dining-room. A fireplace is on the left and a mantel. A bookcase contains law books and sporting books. A full-length portrait of* CYNTHIA *is on the wall. Nothing of this portrait is seen by the audience except the gilt frame and a space of canvas. A large table with writing materials is littered over with law books, sporting books, papers, pipes, crops, and a pair of spurs. A wedding ring lies on it. There are three very low easy-chairs. The general appearance of the room is extremely gay and garish in color. It has the easy confusion of a man's room. There is a small table on which is a woman's sewing-basket. The sewing-basket is open. A piece of rich fancy work lies on the table, as if a lady had just risen from sewing. On the corner are a lady's gloves. On a chair-back is a lady's hat. It is a half hour later than the close of Act Third. Curtains are drawn over the window. A lamp on the table is lighted. Electric lights about the room are also lighted. One chair is conspicuously standing on its head.*

(*Curtain rises on* NOGAM, *who busies himself at a table, at the back. The door at the back is half open.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Coming in door.*) Eh—what did you say your name was?

NOGAM. Nogam, sir.

SIR WILFRID. Nogam? I've been here thirty minutes. Where are the cigars? (NOGAM *motions to a small table near the entrance door where the cigars are.*) Thank you. Nogam, Mr. Karslake was to have followed us here, immediately.

(*He lights a cigar.*)

NOGAM. Mr. Karslake just now 'phoned from his club (SIR WILFRID *comes down the stage.*), and he 's on his way home, sir.

SIR WILFRID. Nogam, why is that chair upside down?

NOGAM. Our orders, sir.

VIDA. (*Speaking as she comes on.*) Oh, Wilfrid! (SIR WILFRID *turns.* VIDA *comes slowly down the stage.*) I can't be left longer alone with the lobster! He reminds me too much of Phillimore!

SIR WILFRID. Karslake 's coming; stopped at his club on the way! (*To* NOGAM.) You have n't heard anything of Mrs. Karslake—?

NOGAM. (*Surprised.*) No, sir!

SIR WILFRID. (*In an aside to* VIDA, *as they move to appear to be out of* NOGAM'S *hearing.*) Deucedly odd, ye know —for the Reverend Matthew declared she left Phillimore's house before *he* did,— and she told him she was coming here!

(NOGAM *evidently takes this in.*)

VIDA. Oh, she 'll turn up.

SIR WILFRID. Yes, but I don't see how the Reverend Phillimore had the time to get here and make us man and wife, don't y' know—

VIDA. Oh, Matthew had a fast horse and Cynthia a slow one—or she 's a woman and changed her mind! Perhaps she 's gone back and married Phillimore. And besides, dear, Matthew was n't in the house four minutes and a half; only just long enough to hoop the hoop. (*She twirls her new wedding ring gently about her finger.*) Was n't it lucky he had a ring in his pocket?

SIR WILFRID. Rather.

VIDA. And are you aware, dear, that Phillimore bought and intended it for Cynthia? Do come (*she goes up to the door through which she entered*), I 'm desperately hungry! Whenever I 'm married that 's the effect it has!

(VIDA *goes out.* SIR WILFRID *sees her through door, but stops to speak to* NOGAM.)

SIR WILFRID. We 'll give Mr. Karslake ten minutes, Nogam. If he does not come then, you might serve supper.

(*He follows* VIDA.)

NOGAM. (*To* SIR WILFRID.) Yes, sir.

(*Door opens.*)

(*Enter* FIDDLER.)

FIDDLER. (*Easy and business-like.*) Hello, Nogam, where 's the guv'nor? That mare 's off her oats, and I 've got to see him.

NOGAM. He 'll soon be here.

FIDDLER. Who was the parson I met leaving the house?

NOGAM. (*Whispering.*) Sir Wilfrid and Mrs. Phillimore have a date with the guv'nor in the dining-room, and the reverend gentleman—

(*He makes a gesture as of giving an ecclesiastical blessing.*)

FIDDLER. (*Amazed.*) He has n't spliced them? (NOGAM *assents.*) He has? They 're married? Never saw a parson could resist it!

NOGAM. Yes, but I 've got another piece of news for you. Who do you think the Rev. Phillimore expected to find *here?*

FIDDLER. (*Proud of having the knowledge.*) Mrs. Karslake? I saw her headed this way in a hansom with a balky horse only a minute ago. If she hoped to be in at the finish—

(FIDDLER *is about to set chair on its legs.*)

NOGAM. (*Quickly.*) Mr. Fiddler, sir, please to let it alone.

FIDDLER. (*Putting chair down in surprise.*) Does it live on its blooming head?

NOGAM. Don't you remember? *She* threw it on its head when she left here, and he won't have it up. Ah, that 's it—hat, sewing-basket and all,—the whole rig is to remain as it was when she handed him his knock-out. (*A bell rings outside.*)

FIDDLER. There 's the guv'nor—I hear him!

NOGAM. I 'll serve the supper. (*Taking letter from pocket and putting it on mantel.*) Mr. Fiddler, would you mind giving this to the guv'nor? It 's from his lawyer—his lawyer could n't find him and left it with me. He said it was very important. (*Bell rings again. Speaking off to* SIR WILFRID.) I 'm coming, sir!

(NOGAM *goes out, and shuts door. Enter* JOHN KARSLAKE. *He looks downhearted, his hat is pushed over his eyes. His hands are in his pockets. He enters slowly and heavily. He sees* FIDDLER, *who salutes, forgetting the letter.* JOHN *slowly sits in armchair at the study table.*)

JOHN. (*Speaking as he walks to his chair.*) Hello, Fiddler!

(*Pause.* JOHN *throws himself into a chair, keeping his hat on. Throws down his gloves, sighing.*)

FIDDLER. Came in to see you, sir, about Cynthia K.

JOHN. (*Drearily.*) Damn Cynthia K!—

FIDDLER. Could n't have a word with you?

JOHN. (*Grumpy.*) No!

FIDDLER. Yes, sir.

JOHN. Fiddler.

FIDDLER. Yes, sir.

JOHN. Mrs. Karslake—(FIDDLER *nods.*) You used to say she was our mascot?

FIDDLER. Yes, sir.

JOHN. Well, she 's just married herself to a—a sort of a man!

FIDDLER. Sorry to hear it, sir.

JOHN. Well, Fiddler, between you and me, we 're a pair of idiots.

FIDDLER. Yes, sir!

JOHN. And now it 's too late!

FIDDLER. Yes, sir—oh, beg your pardon, sir—your lawyer left a letter.

(JOHN *takes the letter; opens it and reads it, indifferently at first.*)

JOHN. (*As he opens letter.*) What 's he got to say, more than what his wife said? —Eh—(*as he reads, he is dumbfounded*) what?—Will explain.—Error in wording of telegram.—Call me up.—(*Turning to telephone quickly.*) The man can't mean that she 's still— Hello! Hello! (JOHN *listens.*)

FIDDLER. Would like to have a word with you, sir—

JOHN. Hello, Central!

FIDDLER. That mare—

JOHN. (*Looks at letter; speaks into 'phone.*) 33246a 38! Did you get it?

FIDDLER. That mare, sir, she 's got a touch of malaria—

JOHN. (*At the 'phone.*) Hello, Central—33246a—38!—Clayton Osgood—yes, yes, and say, Central—get a move on you!

FIDDLER. If you think well of it, sir, I 'll give her a tonic—

JOHN. (*Still at the 'phone.*) Hello! Yes —yes—Jack Karslake. Is that you, Clayton? Yes—yes—well—

FIDDLER. Or if you like, sir, I 'll give her—

JOHN. (*Turning on* FIDDLER.) Shut up! (*To 'phone.*) What was that? Not you —not you—a technical error? You mean to say that Mrs. Karslake is still— my— Hold the wire, Central—get off the wire! Get off the wire! Is that you, Clayton? Yes, yes—she and I are still— I got it! Good-bye!

(*He hangs up the receiver and falls back in the chair. For a moment he is overcome. He takes up the telephone book.*)

FIDDLER. All very well, Mr. Karslake, but I must know if I 'm to give her a—

JOHN. (*Turning over the leaves of the telephone book in hot haste.*) What 's Phillimore's number?

FIDDLER. If you 've no objections, I think I 'll give her a—

JOHN. (*As before.*) L—M—N—O—P— It 's too late! She 's married by this! Married!—and—my God—I—I am the cause. Phillimore—

FIDDLER. I 'll give her—

JOHN. Give her wheatina!—give her grape nuts—give her away! (FIDDLER *moves away.*) Only be quiet! Phillimore!

(*Enter* SIR WILFRID.)

SIR WILFRID. Hello! We 'd almost given you up!

JOHN. (*Still in his agitation unable to find* PHILLIMORE'S *number.*) Just a moment! I 'm trying to get Phillimore on the 'phone to—to tell Mrs. Karslake—

SIR WILFRID. No good, my boy—she 's on her way here! (JOHN *drops book and looks up dumbfounded.*) The Reverend Matthew was here, y' see—and he said—

JOHN. (*Rising, he turns.*) Mrs. Karslake is coming here? (SIR WILFRID *nods.*) To this house? Here?

SIR WILFRID. That 's right.

JOHN. Coming here? You 're sure? (SIR WILFRID *nods assent.*) Fiddler, I want you to stay here, and if Mrs. Karslake comes, don't fail to let me know! Now then, for Heaven's sake, what did Matthew say to you?

SIR WILFRID. Come along in and I 'll tell you.

JOHN. On your life now, Fiddler, don't fail to let me—

(*Exeunt* JOHN *and* SIR WILFRID.)

VIDA. (*Voice off.*) Ah, here you are!

FIDDLER. Phew!

(*There is a moment's pause, and* CYNTHIA *enters. She comes in very quietly, almost shyly, and as if she were uncertain of her welcome.*)

CYNTHIA. Fiddler! Where is he? Has he come? Is he here? Has he gone?

FIDDLER. (*Rattled.*) Nobody 's gone, ma'am, except the Reverend Matthew Phillimore.

CYNTHIA. Matthew? He 's been here and gone? (FIDDLER *nods assent.*) You

don't mean I'm too late? He's married them already?

FIDDLER. Nogam says he married them!

CYNTHIA. He's married them! Married! Married before I could get here! (*Sitting in armchair.*) Married in less time than it takes to pray for rain! Oh, well, the church—the church is a regular quick marriage counter. (*Voices of* VIDA *and* JOHN *heard in light-hearted laughter.*) Oh!

FIDDLER. I'll tell Mr. Karslake—

CYNTHIA. (*Rising and going to the door through which* JOHN *left the stage; she turns the key in the lock and takes it out.*) No—I would n't see him for the world! (*She comes down with key to the work-table.*) If I'm too late, I'm too late! and that's the end of it! (*She lays key on table and remains standing near it.*) I've come, and now I'll go! (*Long pause.* CYNTHIA *looks about the room and changes her tone.*) Well, Fiddler, it's all a good deal as it used to be in my day.

FIDDLER. No, ma'am—everything changed, even the horses.

CYNTHIA. (*Absent-mindedly.*) Horses—how are the horses?

(*Throughout this scene she gives the idea that she is saying good-bye to her life with* JOHN.)

FIDDLER. Ah, when husband and wife splits, ma'am, it's the horses that suffer. Oh, yes, ma'am, we're all changed since you give us the go-by,—even the guv'nor.

CYNTHIA. How's he changed?

FIDDLER. Lost his sharp for horses, and ladies, ma'am—gives 'em both the boiled eye.

CYNTHIA. I can't say I see any change; there's my portrait—I suppose he sits and pulls faces at me.

FIDDLER. Yes, ma'am, I think I'd better tell him of your bein' here.

CYNTHIA. (*Gently but decidedly.*) No, Fiddler, no! (*She again looks about her.*) The room's in a terrible state of disorder. However, your new mistress will attend to that. (*Pause.*) Why, that's not her hat!

FIDDLER. Yours, ma'am.

CYNTHIA. Mine! (*She goes to the table to look at it.*) Is that my work-basket? (*Pause.*) My gloves? (FIDDLER *assents.*) And I suppose—(*She hurriedly goes to the writing-table.*) My—yes, there it is: my wedding ring!—just where I dropped it! Oh, oh, oh, he keeps it like this—hat, gloves, basket and ring, everything just as it was that crazy, mad day when I—(*Glances at* FIDDLER *and breaks off.*) But for Heaven's sake, Fiddler, set that chair on its feet!

FIDDLER. Against orders, ma'am.

CYNTHIA. Against orders?

FIDDLER. You kicked it over, ma'am, the day you left us.

CYNTHIA. No wonder he hates me with the chair in that state! He nurses his wrath to keep it warm. So, after all, Fiddler, everything *is* changed, and that chair is the proof of it. I suppose Cynthia K is the only thing in the world that cares a whinney whether I'm alive or dead. (*She breaks down and sobs.*) How is she, Fiddler?

FIDDLER. Off her oats, ma'am, this evening.

CYNTHIA. Off her oats! Well, she loves me, so I suppose she will die, or change, or—or something. Oh, she'll die, there's no doubt about that—she'll die. (FIDDLER, *who has been watching his chance, takes the key off the table while she is sobbing, tiptoes up the stage, unlocks the door and goes out. After he has done so,* CYNTHIA *rises and dries her eyes.*) There—I'm a fool—I must go—before—before—he—

(*As she speaks her last word* JOHN *comes on.*)

JOHN. Mrs. Karslake!

CYNTHIA. (*Confused.*) I—I—I just heard Cynthia K was ill—(JOHN *assents.* CYNTHIA *tries to put on a cheerful and indifferent manner.*) I—I ran round—I—and—and— (*Pausing, she turns and comes down.*) Well, I understand it's all over.

JOHN. (*Cheerfully.*) Yes, it's all over.

CYNTHIA. How is the bride?

JOHN. Oh, she's a wonder.

CYNTHIA. Indeed! Did she paw the ground like the war horse in the Bible? I'm sure when Vida sees a wedding ring she smells the battle afar off. As for you, my dear Karslake, I should have thought once bitten, twice shy! But, you know best.

(*Enter* VIDA.)

VIDA. Oh, Cynthia, I've just been through it again, and I feel as if I were eighteen. There's no use talking about it, my dear, with a woman it's never the second time! And how nice you were,

Jack,—he never even laughed at us! (*Enter* SIR WILFRID, *with hat and cane.* VIDA *kisses* JOHN.) That's the wages of virtue!

SIR WILFRID. (*In time to see her kiss* JOHN.) I say, is it the custom? Every time she does that, my boy, you owe me a thousand pounds. (*Seeing* CYNTHIA, *who approaches them, he looks at her and* JOHN *in turn.*) Mrs. Karslake. (*To* JOHN.) And then you say it's not an extraordinary country!

(CYNTHIA *is more and more puzzled.*)

VIDA. (*To* JOHN.) See you next Derby, Jack. (*Crossing to door. To* SIR WILFRID.) Come along, Wilfrid! We really ought to be going. (*To* CYNTHIA.) I hope, dear, you haven't married him! Phillimore's a tomb! Good-bye, Cynthia—I'm so happy! (*As she goes.*) Just think of the silly people, dear, that only have this sensation once in a lifetime!

(*Exit* VIDA. JOHN *follows* VIDA *off.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*To* CYNTHIA.) Good-bye, Mrs. Karslake. And I say, ye know, if you have married that dull old Phillimore fellah, why, when you've divorced him, come over and stay at Traynham! I mean, of course, ye know, bring your new husband. There'll be lots of horses to show you, and a whole covey of jolly little Cates-Darbys. Mind you come! (*With real delicacy of feeling and forgetting his wife.*) Never liked a woman as much in my life as I did you!

VIDA. (*Outside; calling him.*) Wilfrid, dear!

SIR WILFRID. (*Loyal to the woman who has caught him.*) —except the one that's calling me!

(*Reënter* JOHN. SIR WILFRID *nods to him and goes off.* JOHN *shuts the door and crosses the stage. A pause.*)

CYNTHIA. So you're not married?

JOHN. No. But I know that you imagined I was. (*Pause.*)

CYNTHIA. I suppose you think a woman has no right to divorce a man—and still continue to feel a keen interest in his affairs?

JOHN. Well, I'm not so sure about that, but I don't quite see how—

CYNTHIA. A woman can be divorced—and still—(JOHN *assents; she hides her embarrassment.*) Well, my dear Karslake, you've a long life before you, in which to learn how such a state of mind is possible! So I won't stop to explain. Will you be kind enough to get me a cab?

(*She moves to the door.*)

JOHN. Certainly. I was going to say I am not surprised at your feeling an interest in me. I'm only astonished that, having actually married Phillimore, you come here—

CYNTHIA. (*Indignantly.*) I'm not married to him! (*A pause.*)

JOHN. I left you on the brink—made me feel a little uncertain.

CYNTHIA. (*In a matter-of-course tone.*) I changed my mind—that's all.

JOHN. (*Taking his tone from her.*) Of course. (*A pause.*) Are you going to marry him?

CYNTHIA. I don't know.

JOHN. Does he know you—

CYNTHIA. I told him I was coming here.

JOHN. Oh! He'll turn up here, then—eh? (CYNTHIA *is silent.*) And you'll go back with him, I suppose?

CYNTHIA. (*Talking at random.*) Oh—yes—I suppose so. I—I haven't thought much about it.

JOHN. (*Changing his tone.*) Well, sit down; do. Till he comes—talk it over. (*He places the armchair more comfortably for her.*) This is a more comfortable chair!

CYNTHIA. (*Shamefacedly.*) You never liked me to sit in that one!

JOHN. Oh, well—it's different now. (CYNTHIA *crosses and sits down, near the upset chair. There is a long pause.* JOHN *crosses the stage.*) You don't mind if I smoke?

CYNTHIA. (*Shaking her head.*) No.

JOHN. (*He lights his pipe and sits on arm of chair.*) Of course, if you find my presence painful, I'll—skiddoo.

(*He indicates the door.* CYNTHIA *shakes her head.* JOHN *smokes pipe and remains seated.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Suddenly and quickly.*) It's just simply a fact, Karslake, and that's all there is to it—if a woman has once been married—that is, the first man she marries—then—she may quarrel, she may hate him—she may despise him—but she'll always be jealous of him with other women. Always!

(JOHN *takes this as if he were simply glad to have the information.*)

JOHN. Oh— Hm! ah—yes—yes. (*A pause.*)

CYNTHIA. You probably felt jealous of Phillimore.

JOHN. (*Reasonably, sweetly, and in doubt.*) N-o! I felt simply: Let him take his medicine. (*Apologetically.*)

CYNTHIA. Oh!

JOHN. I beg your pardon—I meant—

CYNTHIA. You meant what you said!

JOHN. (*Comes a step to her.*) Mrs. Karslake, I apologize—I won't do it again. But it 's too late for you to be out alone—Philip will be here in a moment—and of course, then—

CYNTHIA. It is n't what you *say*—it 's—it 's—it 's everything. It 's the entire situation. Suppose by any chance I don't marry Phillimore! And suppose I were seen at two or three in the morning leaving my former husband's house! It 's all wrong. I have no business to be here! I 'm going! You 're perfectly horrid to me, you know—and—the whole place—it 's so familiar, and so—so associated with—with—

JOHN. Discord and misery—I know—

CYNTHIA. Not at all with discord and misery! With harmony and happiness—with—with first love, and infinite hope—and—and—Jack Karslake,—if you don't set that chair on its legs, I think I 'll explode.

(JOHN *crosses the stage rapidly and sets chair on its legs. His tone changes.*)

JOHN. (*While setting chair on its legs.*) There! I beg your pardon.

CYNTHIA. (*Nervously.*) I believe I hear Philip. (*Rises.*)

JOHN. (*Going up to the window.*) N-o! That 's the policeman trying the front door! And now, see here, Mrs. Karslake,—you 're only here for a short minute, because you can't help yourself, but I want you to understand that I 'm not trying to be disagreeable—I don't want to revive all the old unhappy—

CYNTHIA. Very well, if you don't—give me my hat. (JOHN *does so.*) And my sewing! And my gloves, please! (*She indicates the several articles which lie on the small table.*) Thanks! (CYNTHIA *throws the lot into the fireplace, and returns to the place she has left near table.*) There! I feel better! And now—all I ask is—

JOHN. (*Laughs.*) My stars, what a pleasure it is!

CYNTHIA. What is?

JOHN. Seeing you in a whirlwind!

CYNTHIA. (*Wounded by his seeming indifference.*) Oh!

JOHN. No, but I mean, a real pleasure! Why not? Time 's passed since you and I were together—and—eh—

CYNTHIA. And you 've forgotten what a vile temper I had!

JOHN. (*Reflectively.*) Well, you did kick the stuffing out of the matrimonial buggy—

CYNTHIA. (*Pointedly but with good temper.*) It was n't a buggy; it was a break cart— (*She stands back of the armchair.*) It 's all very well to blame me! But when you married me, I 'd never had a bit in my mouth!

JOHN. Well, I guess I had a pretty hard hand. Do you remember the time you threw both your slippers out of the window?

CYNTHIA. Yes, and do you remember the time you took my fan from me by force?

JOHN. After you slapped my face with it!

CYNTHIA. Oh, oh! I hardly touched your face! And do you remember the day you held my wrists?

JOHN. You were going to bite me!

CYNTHIA. Jack! I never! I showed my teeth at you! And I said I would bite you!

JOHN. Cynthia, I never knew you to break your word! (*He laughs casually.*) And anyhow—they were awfully pretty teeth! (CYNTHIA, *though bolt upright, has ceased to seem pained.*) And I say—do you remember, Cyn—

(*He leans over the armchair to talk to her.*)

CYNTHIA. (*After a pause.*) You ought n't to call me "Cyn"—it 's not nice of you. It 's sort of cruel. I 'm not—Cyn to you now.

JOHN. Awfully sorry; did n't mean to be beastly, Cyn. (CYNTHIA *turns quickly.* JOHN *stamps his foot.*) Cynthia! Sorry. I 'll make it a commandment: thou shalt not Cyn!!

(CYNTHIA *laughs and wipes her eyes.*)

CYNTHIA. How can you, Jack? How can you?

JOHN. Well, hang it, my dear child, I—I 'm sorry, but you know I always got foolish with you. Your laugh 'd make a horse laugh. Why, don't you remember that morning in the park before breakfast—when you laughed so hard your horse ran away with you!

CYNTHIA. I do, I do! (*Both laugh. The door opens.*)

(NOGAM *enters.*)

But what was it started me laughing? (*Laughing, sits down and laughs again.*) That morning. Was n't it somebody we met? (*Laughs.*) Was n't it a man on a horse? (*Laughs.*)

JOHN. (*Laughing too.*) Of course! You did n't know him in those days! But I did! And he looked a sight in the saddle!

(NOGAM, *trying to catch their attention, comes to right of table.*)

CYNTHIA. Who was it?

JOHN. Phillimore!

CYNTHIA. He 's no laughing matter now. (*Sees* NOGAM.) Jack, he 's here!

JOHN. Eh? Oh, Nogam?

NOGAM. Mr. Phillimore, sir—

JOHN. In the house?

NOGAM. On the street in a hansom, sir—and he requests Mrs. Karslake—

JOHN. That 'll do, Nogam. (*Exit* NOGAM. *Pause.* JOHN *from near the window.* CYNTHIA *faces audience.*) Well, Cynthia?

(*He speaks almost gravely and with finality.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Trembling.*) Well?

JOHN. It 's the hour of decision; are you going to marry him? (*Pause.*) Speak up!

CYNTHIA. Jack,—I—I—

JOHN. There he is—you can join him.

(*He points to the street.*)

CYNTHIA. Join Phillimore—and go home—with him—to his house, and Miss Heneage and—

JOHN. The door 's open.

(*He points to the door.*)

CYNTHIA. No, no! It 's mean of you to suggest it!

JOHN. You won't marry—

CYNTHIA. Phillimore—no; never. (*Runs to window.*) No; never, never, Jack.

JOHN. (*He calls out of the window, having opened it.*) It 's all right, Judge. You need n't wait.

(*Pause.* JOHN *comes down.* JOHN *bursts into laughter.* CYNTHIA *looks dazed. He closes door.*)

CYNTHIA. Jack! (JOHN *laughs.*) Yes, but I 'm here, Jack.

JOHN. Why not?

CYNTHIA. You 'll have to take me round to the Holland House!

JOHN. Of course, I will! But, I say Cynthia, there 's no hurry.

CYNTHIA. Why, I—I—can't stay here.

JOHN. No, of course you can't stay here. But you can have a bite, though. (CYNTHIA *shakes her head.* JOHN *places the small chair which was upset, next to table.*) Oh, I insist. Just look at yourself—you 're as pale as a sheet and—here, here. Sit right down. I insist! By George, you must do it!

(CYNTHIA *crosses to chair beside table and sits.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Faintly.*) I *am* hungry.

JOHN. Just wait a moment.

(*Exit* JOHN.)

CYNTHIA. I don't want more than a nibble! (*Pause.*) I am sorry to give you so much trouble.

JOHN. No trouble at all. (*He can be heard off the stage, busied with glasses and a tray.*) A hansom of course, to take you round to your hotel?

(*Speaking as he comes down.*)

CYNTHIA. (*To herself.*) I wonder how I ever dreamed I could marry that man.

JOHN. (*By table by this time.*) Can't imagine! There!

CYNTHIA. I am hungry. Don't forget the hansom.

(*She eats; he waits on her, setting this and that before her.*)

JOHN. (*Going to door; opens it and speaks off.*) Nogam, a hansom at once.

NOGAM. (*Off stage.*) Yes, sir.

JOHN. (*Back to above table; from here on he shows his feelings for her.*) How does it go?

CYNTHIA. (*Faintly.*) It goes all right. Thanks! (*Hardly eating at all.*)

JOHN. You always used to like anchovy. (CYNTHIA *nods and eats.*) Claret? (CYNTHIA *shakes her head.*) Oh, but you must!

CYNTHIA. (*Tremulously.*) Ever so little. (*He fills her glass and then his.*) Thanks!

JOHN. Here 's to old times.

(*Raising glass.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Very tremulous.*) Please not!

JOHN. Well, here 's to your next husband.

CYNTHIA. (*Very tenderly.*) Don't!

JOHN. Oh, well, then, what shall the toast be?

CYNTHIA. I 'll tell you—(*pause*) you can drink to the relation I am to you!

JOHN. (*Laughing.*) Well—what relation are you?

CYNTHIA. I 'm your first wife once removed!

JOHN. (*Laughing, he drinks.*) I say, you 're feeling better.

CYNTHIA. Lots.

JOHN. (*Reminiscent.*) It 's a good deal like those mornings after the races—is n't it?

CYNTHIA. (*Nodding.*) Yes. Is that the hansom? (*Half rises.*)

JOHN. (*Going up to the window.*) No.

CYNTHIA. (*Sitting again.*) What is that sound?

JOHN. Don't you remember?

CYNTHIA. No.

JOHN. That 's the rumbling of the early milk wagons.

CYNTHIA. Oh, Jack.

JOHN. Do you recognize it now?

CYNTHIA. Do I? We used to hear that—just at the hour, did n't we—when we came back from awfully jolly late suppers and things!

JOHN. H'm!

CYNTHIA. It must be fearfully late. I must go.

(*She rises, crosses to chair, where she has left her cloak. She sees that* JOHN *will not help her and puts it on herself.*)

JOHN. Oh, don't go—why go?

CYNTHIA. (*Embarrassed and agitated.*) All good things come to an end, you know.

JOHN. They don't need to.

CYNTHIA. Oh, you don't mean that! And, you know, Jack, if I were caught—seen at this hour, leaving this house, you know—it 's the most scandalous thing any one ever did my being here at all. Good-bye, Jack! (*Pause; almost in tears.*) I 'd like to say, I—I—I—well, I shan't be bitter about you hereafter, and— (*Pause.*) Thank you awfully, old man, for the fodder and all that!

(*She turns to go out.*)

JOHN. Mrs. Karslake—wait—

CYNTHIA. (*Stopping to hear.*) Well?

JOHN. (*Serious.*) I 've rather an ugly bit of news for you.

CYNTHIA. Yes?

JOHN. I don't believe you know that I have been testing the validity of the decree of divorce which you procured.

CYNTHIA. Oh, have you?

JOHN. Yes; you know I felt pretty warmly about it.

CYNTHIA. Well?

JOHN. Well, I 've been successful. (*Pause.*) The decree 's been declared invalid. Understand?

CYNTHIA. (*Looking at him a moment; then speaking.*) Not—precisely.

JOHN. (*Pause.*) I 'm awfully sorry—I 'm awfully sorry, Cynthia, but, you 're my wife still. (*Pause.*)

CYNTHIA. (*With rapture.*) Honor bright?

(*She sinks into the armchair.*)

JOHN. (*Nodding, half laughingly.*) Crazy country, is n't it?

CYNTHIA. (*Nodding. Pause.*) Well, Jack—what 's to be done?

JOHN. (*Gently.*) Whatever you say.

NOGAM. (*Quietly enters.*) Hansom, sir.

(*Exits.* CYNTHIA *rises.*)

JOHN. Why don't you finish your supper?

(CYNTHIA *hesitates.*)

CYNTHIA. The—the—hansom—

JOHN. Why go to the Holland? After all—you know, Cyn, you 're at home here.

CYNTHIA. No, Jack, I 'm not—I 'm not at home here—unless—unless—

JOHN. Out with it!

CYNTHIA. (*Bursting into tears.*) Unless I—unless I 'm at home in your heart, Jack!

JOHN. What do you think?

CYNTHIA. I don't believe you want me to stay.

JOHN. Don't you?

CYNTHIA. No, no, you hate me still. You never can forgive me. I know you can't. For I can never forgive myself. Never, Jack, never, never!

(*She sobs and he takes her in his arms.*)

JOHN. (*Very tenderly.*) Cyn! I love you! (*Strongly.*) And you 've got to stay! And hereafter you can chuck chairs around till all 's blue! Not a word now. (*He draws her gently to a chair.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Wiping her tears.*) Oh, Jack! Jack!

JOHN. I 'm as hungry as a shark. We 'll nibble together.

CYNTHIA. Well, all I can say is, I feel that of all the improprieties I ever committed this—this—

JOHN. This takes the claret, eh? Oh, Lord, how happy I am!

CYNTHIA. Now don't say that! You 'll make me cry more.

(*She wipes her eyes.* JOHN *takes out the wedding ring from his pocket; he lifts a wine glass, drops the ring into it and offers her the glass.*)

JOHN. Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. (*Looking at it and wiping her eyes.*) What is it?

JOHN. Benedictine!

CYNTHIA. Why, you know I never take it.

JOHN. Take this one for my sake.
CYNTHIA. That 's not benedictine. (*With gentle curiosity.*) What is it?
JOHN. (*He slides the ring out of the glass and puts his arm about* CYNTHIA. *He slips the ring on to her finger and, as he kisses her hand, says.*) Your wedding ring!

THE WITCHING HOUR

BY

Augustus Thomas

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THE WITCHING HOUR*

The Witching Hour represents the play that reflects a phase of modern interest, in this case telepathy. It also represents Mr. Thomas's work in the most significant period, so far, of his career. Augustus Thomas was born in St. Louis, Missouri, January 8, 1857, the son of Dr. Elihu B. Thomas. His father was associated with the theatre, being director for a time of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. Mr. Thomas tells us, that after his father returned to St. Louis in 1865, Dr. Thomas told him much concerning the actors with whom he had come in contact. Augustus Thomas was taken to the theatre early in his life and has grown up in its atmosphere. He was educated in the public schools of St. Louis, was a page in the Forty-first Congress and up to his twenty-second year was in the service of the freight department of various railroads, where, he tells us, he learned much about human nature. Later on, he became a special writer on newspapers in St. Louis, Kansas City, and New York, and was for a time editor and proprietor of the *Kansas City Mirror*.

He began to write plays when he was fourteen years old. By the time he was seventeen he had organized an amateur company which he took on circuit. It was at this time that such early efforts as *Alone* (1875), or *A Big Rise* (1882), his earliest plays known by name, were written. In 1883 he dramatized Mrs. Burnett's *Editha's Burglar*, and organized a professional company which he took around the country playing this and other plays. In 1889 a four-act play by the title of *The Burglar* became a success in New York and since then Mr. Thomas has devoted himself to playwriting. He was for a time the Art Director of the Charles Frohman interests. On August 1, 1922 he became the Executive Chairman of the Producing Managers' Association, and in that capacity he has taken a leading part in adjusting the difficulties between the actors and the producing managers. In November 1924 the French Government bestowed upon Mr. Thomas the decoration of "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" in recognition of the valuable services he had rendered the cause of France.

Mr. Thomas has written sixty-three plays including one act plays and dramatizations or adaptations of other material. He stands in our drama for literary craftsmanship combined with practical knowledge of the stage and for a serious interest in the furtherance of dramatic progress. His work is not the result of accidental inspiration, but he has proceeded on a basis of logical deduction from observed facts to an establishment of fundamental principles in dramatic construction. His art is native, too; his first significant play, *Alabama*, produced

* This introduction has been entirely revised for the Third Edition.

April 1, 1891, at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, had as its theme the reunited country. *In Mizzoura* (1893) pictured in a less significant though amusing manner the customs of that State. *Arizona*, produced first, June 12, 1899, at Hamlin's Grand Opera House, Chicago, is a better play than any of the ones which preceded it, and Mr. Thomas may be said to have entered into his most significant period with this play. It was laid at the time of the Spanish-American War, but the war itself was of little significance. The play portrayed American life in its picturesque western form, not the "bad man" of fiction, but the actual life of the great ranches, with real characters in them. *Arizona* had a successful London production in 1902. Mr. Thomas produced next some charming comedies, either like *Oliver Goldsmith* (1899), an imaginative treatment of literary history, or like *The Earl of Pawtucket* (1903), or *Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots* (1905), clever treatments of modern life.

The Witching Hour, produced first at the Hackett Theatre, New York City, November 18, 1907, is probably Mr. Thomas's greatest play. It represents the next phase of his work, the study of modern modes of interest. One would call them "problems," except that the word suggests an element that is absent from Mr. Thomas's plays. The central theme of the play, the influence of human minds through the strength of suggestion, had been with Mr. Thomas for many years. Incidents that had proved to him the possibility of such suggestions had occurred in his early days when he was managing companies in the West, and he waited till the time was ripe and public interest was ready. In *As a Man Thinks*, he treated the relations of the modern American husband and wife, and put into dramatic form the real reason for the prevalence of the so-called double standard of morality. It is a sane and healthful play, for it not only deals with this question without morbidity or suggestiveness, but it also shows the futility of race antagonism and it calls attention to the permanent force of character, through the masterly portrait of "Dr. Seelig." In *The Copperhead* he painted a remarkable portrait of the middle-western town during the early days of the Civil War and also showed in dramatic form the influence of Lincoln upon a patriot who was willing to appear a Confederate spy in order more effectively to serve his country.

The following list of plays has been based upon that given by Mr. Thomas in *The Print of My Remembrance*, but certain additions and corrections have been made, after submission to the playwright himself. One-act plays are starred. Collaborations or dramatizations of other material are indicated by a dagger. *Alone* (1875), *The Big Rise* (1882), *Editha's Burglar* * † (1883), *A New Year's Call* * (1883), *A Man of the World* * (1883), *A Leaf from the Woods* * (1883), *A Studio Picture* * (1883), *Combustion* (1884), *The Burglar* (1889), *A Woman of the World* * (1890) *Reckless Temple* (1890), *After Thoughts* * (1890), *The Outside Man* (1890), *A Night's Frolic* (1891), *Alabama* (1891), *For Money* †

(1892), *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* † (1892), *The Holly Tree Inn* * † (1892), *Surrender* (1892), *In Mizzoura* (1893), *A Proper Impropriety* * (1893), *The Music Box* * (1894), *New Blood* (1894), *The Man Upstairs* * (1895), *Colonel George of Mount Vernon* (1898), *The Capitol* (1895), *That Overcoat* * (1896–1898), *The Jucklins* † (1896), *Chimmie Fadden* † (1896), *The Hoosier Doctor* (1897), *The Meddler,* first played as *Don't Tell Her Husband* (1898), *The Bonnie Brier Bush* † (1898), *Arizona* (1899), *Oliver Goldsmith* (1899), *On the Quiet* (1900), *Champagne Charlie* (1901), *Colorado* (1901), *Soldiers of Fortune* (1902), *The Earl of Pawtucket* (1903), *The Other Girl* (1903), *Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots* (1905), *The Education of Mr. Pipp* † (1905), *The Embassy Ball* (1905), *De Lancey* (1905), *The Ranger* (1907), *The Member from Ozark* (1907), *The Witching Hour* (1907), *The Harvest Moon* (1909), *The Matinee Idol* (1909), *As a Man Thinks* (1911), *The Model* (1912), *Mere Man* (1912), *At Bay* † (1913) with George Scarborough, *The Three of Hearts* † (1913), *Indian Summer* (1913), *The Battle Cry* † (1914), *The Nightingale* (1914), *Rio Grande* (1916), *The Copperhead* (1918), *Palmy Days* (1919), *Speak of the Devil* (1920), *Tent of Pompey* * (1920), *Nemesis* (1921).

Alabama and *Arizona* have been published by the Dramatic Publishing Company, *As a Man Thinks* by Duffield and in Baker's *Modern American Plays.* Samuel French has published *The Witching Hour, Oliver Goldsmith, The Harvest Moon, In Mizzoura, Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots, The Other Girl* and *The Earl of Pawtucket,* with accounts by Mr. Thomas of the genesis of the plays. These introductions contain valuable material for students of dramatic technique. *The Copperhead* was included in Cohen's *Longer Plays by Modern Authors.*

The Print of My Remembrance, published by Scribners in 1922, is a fascinating autobiography of Mr. Thomas, which will be of great value to students of the drama.

For a thorough analysis of Mr. Thomas's plays, see William Winter, *The Wallet of Time,* Vol. 2, pp. 529–557. See also W. P. Eaton, *The American Stage of Today* (1908), pp. 27-44, which contains an analysis of *The Witching Hour.* A criticism of the first performance appears in *The Theatre,* Vol. 8, p. 2, 1908.

The present text has been revised especially for this collection by Mr. Thomas, to whom the editor is indebted for permission to reprint it.

Note to Fourth Edition.

Still Waters, a play whose theme was a criticism of prohibition, was produced in Washington, D. C., September 7, 1925. It has been published by Samuel French (1926), who has also re-issued *The Copperhead,* with a critical introduction by Mr. Thomas. The latest treatment of Mr. Thomas's work is to be found in the present editor's *History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* Vol. 1, pp. 239–264.

THE ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

Hackett Theatre, New York City, November 18, 1907

In the order of their first appearance

Jo, a servant	Mr. S. E. Hines
Jack Brookfield, professional gambler	Mr. John Mason
Tom Denning	Mr. Freeman Barnes
Harvey, a servant	Mr. Thomas C. Jackson
Mrs. Alice Campbell, Jack's sister	Miss Ethel Winthrop
Mrs. Helen Whipple, Clay's mother	Mrs. Jeanne Eustace
Viola Campbell	Miss Adelaide Nowak
Clay Whipple	Mr. Morgan Coman
Frank Hardmuth	Mr. George Nash
Lew Ellinger	Mr. William Sampson
Justice Prentice	Mr. Russ Whytal
Justice Henderson	Mr. E. I. Walton
Colonel Bayley	Mr. Harry Hadfield
Mr. Emmett, a reporter	Mr. Fawnesgaines

THE WITCHING HOUR

ACT FIRST.

SCENE. *The library and card-room at* JACK BROOKFIELD'S, *Louisville.*

There is a large doorway in the center, at the back, which leads into a hallway, in which the banister of a stairway that descends to the street level is seen. A second and smaller doorway is near the front in the wall to the left of the stage. This doorway leads to the dining-room. The second plan of the left wall is occupied by a fireplace and mantel, surmounted by a marine painting. The fireplace is surrounded by a garde au feu *club seat.*

The rest of the left wall, as well as the rear wall on both sides of the center door and all of the right wall, is fitted with bookcases about five feet high, in which are books handsomely bound.

The walls above these bookcases are hung with heavy brocaded Genoese velvet of a deep maroon in color and loosely draped. The ceiling is of carved wood, gilded. On the wall velvet, at proper intervals, are paintings by celebrated modern artists. Some of these paintings are fitted with hooded electric lights. Such a fitting is above a noticeable Corot, which hangs to the right of the center door.

A dark-red rug of luxuriant thickness is on the floor. The furniture is simple, massive, and Colonial in type. It consists of a heavy sofa above the fireplace and running at right angles to the wall. A heavy table fitted with books is in the center; a smaller table for cards is at the stage, right. Chairs are at both tables.

Above the center door is a marble bust of Minerva, surmounted by a bronze raven, lacquered black, evidently illustrating Poe's poem. The Antommarchi death-mask of Napoleon in bronze hangs on the dark wood fireplace. A bronze mask of Beethoven is on one of the bookcases and on another is a bust of Dante. A bronze Sphinx is on another bookcase.

The room is lighted by a standing lamp at the back and by the glow from the fireplace. Over the table, center, is suspended an electric lamp in a large bronze shade. This lamp, while not lighted, is capable of being turned on by a push button, which depends from it.

On the table, center, is a large paper-cutter made of an ivory tusk.

Empty stage. After a pause there is a sound of laughter and dishes, left.

(*Enter* JO, *sleek negro of Pullman car variety, by stairway and center door. He goes to door, left, and pauses—laughter ceases.*)

JO. Massar Brookfield.

JACK. (*Outside, left.*) Well, Jo?

JO. Mr. Denning, sah.

JACK. Ask Mr. Denning to come up.

JO. Yes, sah.

(*Exit center. More talk and laughter, left.*)

(JACK *enters left. He walks to center on way toward main door. Pauses. Returns, left.*)

JACK. (*At door, left.*) Lew! I say—Lew—you ladies excuse Mr. Ellinger a moment?

HELEN, ALICE, VIOLA. (*Outside.*) Oh—yes. Certainly.

(*Enter* LEW ELLINGER, *from dining-room, left.*)

LEW. See me?

JACK. Tom Denning's here—he expects a game. My sister and Mrs. Whipple object to the pasteboards—so don't mention it before them.

LEW. (*Anxiously.*) Not a word—but, Tom—?

JACK. I'll attend to Tom.

LEW. Good.

(*Starts back to dining-room.*)

(*Enter* TOM DENNING, *right center; he is fat, indolent type.*)

TOM. Hello, Lew. (LEW *stops and turns.* JACK *motions him out and* LEW *goes.*)

What you got to-night? Young Rockefeller?

JACK. Some ladies—

TOM. (*Grinning.*) What—

JACK. (*Sternly.*) My sister and her daughter—and a lady friend of theirs.

TOM. (*Disappointed.*)—No game?

JACK. Not until they go.

TOM. (*Getting a peek off into dining-room.*) Oh—chafing-dish.

JACK. They've been to the opera.—I had Harvey brew them some terrapin.

TOM. (*Complaining.*) My luck!

(*His hands hang limp.*)

JACK. No, I think there's some left. (*Pause.*) I'm going to take a long chance and introduce you, Tom, only don't say anything about poker before the ladies.

TOM. Thought you said your *sister*—

JACK. I did.

TOM. Well, she's on, is n't she?

JACK. But she does n't like it—and my *niece*—my niece does n't like it.

(*Enter* HARVEY, *old negro servant, from dining-room, left.*)

HARVEY. I've made some coffee, Mars Jack. You have it in the dining-room or heah, sah?

JACK. (*Going.*) I'll ask the ladies.

TOM. How are you, Harvey?

HARVEY. (*Bowing.*) Mars Denning—

JACK. (*Who has paused at door, left.*) Got some terrapin for Mr. Denning, Harvey?

HARVEY. Yas, sah. (*To* TOM.) Yas, sah. (*Exit* JACK, *left.*)

TOM. They left some of the rum, too, I hope.

HARVEY. Could n't empty my ice-box in one evening, Mars Denning. (*Starts off. Pause.*) De ladies getting up.

(*Stands up stage in front of fire.* TOM *goes right. A pause.*)

(*Enter* JACK.)

JACK. The ladies will have their coffee in here, Harvey.

HARVEY. Yes, sir.

(*Enter* ALICE. *She is smartly gowned and is energetic.*)

JACK. Alice—this is my friend, Mr. Denning—my sister—Mrs. Campbell.

ALICE. Mr. Denning.

(*Enter* HELEN *and* VIOLA. HELEN *is thoroughly feminine in type, and is young-looking for the mother of a boy of twenty—*VIOLA *is an athletic Kentucky girl.*)

HELEN. I never take coffee even after dinner and at this hour—never!

(*Exit* HARVEY.)

JACK. Mrs. Whipple, may I present Mr. Denning?

HELEN. (*Bowing.*) Mr. Denning.

TOM. Good-evening!

JACK. My niece, Miss Viola Campbell.

TOM. How are you? (VIOLA *bows.*)

JACK. Mr. Denning's just left the *foundry* and he's very hungry.

TOM. And thirsty—

JACK. (*Pushing him toward dining-room.*) Yes, and thirsty. Uncle Harvey's going to save his life.

TOM. Ha, ha! Excuse me! (*Exit.*)

ALICE. The foundry?

(*Sits right of table.*)

JACK. Never did a day's work in his life. That's Tom Denning. (*Nods off.*)

VIOLA. (*On sofa at fireplace.*) Tom Denning's the name of the big race-horse.

JACK. Yes—he's *named after* the race-horse.

HELEN. (*On sofa, beside* VIOLA.) *What* does he do?

JACK. His father—father's in the packing business—Kansas City; this fellow has four men *shoveling* money away from him so he can breathe.

(*Starts toward dining-room.*)

ALICE. (*In amused protest.*) Oh, Jack!

JACK. Yes—I'm one of them—you'll find cigarettes in that box.

ALICE. Jack! (*Rises.*)

JACK. (*Apologizing.*) Not *you,* Alice, but—

VIOLA. (*Protesting.*) Well, certainly not for *me,* Uncle Jack?

JACK. Of course, not you . . .

HELEN. Thank you, Mr. Brookfield!

ALICE. (*Joining* JACK.) My dear brother, you confuse the Kentucky ladies with some of your Eastern friends.

JACK. Careful, Alice. *Helen* lived in the East twenty years, remember.

HELEN. But even my *husband* did n't smoke.

JACK. No?

HELEN. *Never*—in his life—

JACK. In his *life?* Why make such a pessimistic distinction?

(HELEN *turns away right.*)

ALICE. Jack! (*After a look to* HELEN.) How can you say a thing like that?

JACK. *She's* the man's widow—*I've got* to say it if any one does.

(*Enter* HARVEY *with coffee.*)

Mr. Denning's got his tortoise, Uncle Harvey?

HARVEY. (*Offering tray to* HELEN.) He's got the same as we all had, Mars Jack. Yas, sah. (*Laughs.*)

HELEN. None, thank you.

(HARVEY *moves on.*)

JACK. I'll take it, Uncle Harvey. I think three or four of them'll help this head of mine.

ALICE. (*Taking coffee.*) Why don't you let Viola cure your headache?

VIOLA. (*Taking coffee.*) Yes, Uncle Jack.

JACK. No, the coffee'll fix it, I'm sure.

(*Exit* HARVEY.)

VIOLA. Sit here while you drink it.

JACK. No—no, Viola. It isn't enough for that. I'll conserve your mesmeric endowment for a real occasion.

(*Swallows coffee in one mouthful.*)

VIOLA. Goodness! Just to please me?

JACK. (*Shaking head.*) Don't want to spoil your awful stories.

(*Exit to dining-room.*)

HELEN. Is Viola a magnetic healer, too?

(*Sits right of table.*)

VIOLA. (*Taking a book, and returning to the sofa, carrying also a large ivory tusk paper-cutter.*) Oh, no.

ALICE. (*Sitting left of table.*) Yes—a remarkable one.

VIOLA. Only headaches, Mrs. Whipple. Those I *crush* out of my victims.

HELEN. I remember Jack used to have a wonderful ability that way as a young man.

VIOLA. He says only with the girls.

ALICE. We know better, don't we?

HELEN. Yes.

VIOLA. Well, for myself, I'd rather have Uncle Jack sit by me than any regular physician I ever saw.

HELEN. You mean if you were ill?

VIOLA. Of course.

ALICE. You must be very clear with Mrs. Whipple on that point, Viola, because she used to prefer your Uncle Jack to sit by her, even when she was n't ill.

HELEN. (*To* VIOLA.) But especially when ill, my dear. (*To* ALICE.) And has he quit it?

ALICE. Yes—you know Jack went into politics for a while.

HELEN. Did he?

ALICE *Local* politics—yes—something about the police did n't please him and then he quit all of his curative work.

HELEN. Why?

ALICE. Well, in politics, I believe there's something unpleasant about the word "heeler."

HELEN. Oh!

VIOLA. Entirely different spelling, however.

HELEN. Our English language is so elastic in that way.

ALICE. Yes, the papers joked about his magnetic touch. The word "touch" is used offensively also. So Jack dropped the whole business.

HELEN. And Viola inherits the ability?

ALICE. Well, if one can inherit ability from an uncle.

HELEN. From a family.

ALICE. That's even more generous, but Viola is like Jack in every way in which a girl may resemble a man. Horses and boats and every kind of personal risk—and—

VIOLA. (*Rises.*) I'm *proud* of it.

ALICE. And Jack spoils her.

VIOLA. Am I spoiled?

(*Goes to back of table.*)

ALICE. He could n't love her more if he were her father—

(*Enter* CLAY, *a boy of twenty.*)

CLAY. (*Pausing at door.*) May I come in?

VIOLA. Certainly.

CLAY. Is n't this a jolly room, mother?

HELEN. Beautiful.

CLAY. (*Waving hand above.*) And the sleeping apartments are what I take pride in. Private bath to every bedroom, reading-lamps just over the pillows—

VIOLA. Have n't you seen the house, Mrs. Whipple?

HELEN. Not above this floor.

ALICE. Would it interest you?

(*Rises and goes left.*)

HELEN. Very much.

ALICE. (*At door of dining-room.*) Jack—

JACK. (*Outside.*) Yes—

ALICE. (*To* HELEN.) Will I do as your guide?

HELEN. (*Rises.*) Oh, yes.

(*Enter* JACK.)

ALICE. I want to show Helen over the house.

JACK. Do.

ALICE. The rooms are empty?

JACK. Empty, of course.

ALICE. Don't be too indignant, they're not always empty. (*To* HELEN.) In *Jack's* house one is liable to find a belated pilgrim in any room.

HELEN. (*Laughing.*) And a lady walking in unannounced would be something of a surprise, would n't she?

JACK. Well—two ladies would, certainly.

ALICE. Jack!

JACK. My dear sister—they *would*. Hard lines when the reputation of a man's house is n't respected by his own sister—ha!

(*Exit left, with mock indignation.*)

HELEN. (*Smiling.*) The same Jack.

ALICE. Intensified and confirmed! (*Pausing at door.*) Will you come, too, Viola?

VIOLA. No, thank you, mother.

(HELEN *looks at* ALICE. *She and* ALICE *go.*)

CLAY. What was Frank Hardmuth saying to you.

(*He indicates the dining-room.*)

VIOLA. When?

CLAY. At supper—and in the box at the theater, too?

VIOLA. Oh—Frank Hardmuth—nobody pays any attention to him.

CLAY. I thought *you* paid a great deal of attention to what he was saying.

VIOLA. In the same theater party a girl's got to listen—or leave the box.

CLAY. Some persons listen to the opera.

VIOLA. I told him that was what I wanted to do.

CLAY. Was he making love to you, Viola?

VIOLA. I should n't call it that.

CLAY. Would anybody else have called it that if they'd overheard it?

VIOLA. I don't think so.

CLAY. Won't you tell me what it was about?

VIOLA. I don't see why you ask.

CLAY. I asked because he seemed so much in earnest—and because *you* seemed so much in earnest.

VIOLA. Well?

CLAY. And Frank Hardmuth's a fellow that'll stand watching. (*Looks off left.*)

VIOLA. (*Smiling.*) He stood a good deal to-night.

CLAY. I mean that he's a clever lawyer and would succeed in making a girl commit herself in some way to *him* before she knew it.

VIOLA. I think that depends more on the way the *girl* feels.

CLAY. Well—I don't want you to listen to Frank Hardmuth under the idea that he's the only chance in Kentucky.

VIOLA. Why, Clay Whipple—

CLAY. You know very well *I've* been courting you myself, Viola, don't you?

VIOLA. You have n't. You've been coming round like a big boy.

CLAY. (*Follows right.*) Have I gone with any other girl—anywhere?

VIOLA. I don't know. (*Sits right.*)

CLAY. And I've spoken to your Uncle Jack about it.

VIOLA. To Uncle Jack?

CLAY. Yes.

VIOLA. (*Rises.*) Nobody told you to speak to Uncle Jack.

CLAY. Mother did.

VIOLA. *Your* mother?

CLAY. Yes. Mother's got regular old-fashioned ideas about boys and young ladies and she said, "if you think Viola *likes* you, the *honorable* thing to do is to speak to her guardian first."

VIOLA. Oh!—you *thought* that, did you?

CLAY. I certainly did.

VIOLA. I can't imagine why.

CLAY. I thought that because you're Jack Brookfield's niece, and nobody of his blood would play a game that is n't fair.

VIOLA. I wish you would n't always throw that up to me. (*Goes to sofa.*) 'T is n't our fault if Uncle Jack's a sporting man. (*Sits.*)

CLAY. (*Following.*) Why, Viola, I was praising him. I think your Uncle Jack the gamest man in Kentucky.

VIOLA. Nor that either. I don't criticize my Uncle Jack, but he's a lot better man than just a fighter or a card-player. I love him for his big heart.

CLAY. So do I. If I'd thought you cared I'd have said you were too much like him at heart to let a fellow come a-courtin' if you meant to refuse him—and that was all that was in my mind when I asked about Frank Hardmuth—and I don't care what Hardmuth said either, if it was n't personal that way.

VIOLA. Frank Hardmuth's nothing to me.

CLAY. And he won't be? (*Pause.*) Will he—? (*Pause.*) Say that. Because I'm awfully in love with you.

VIOLA. Are you?

CLAY. You bet I am. Just Tom-fool heels over head in love with you.

VIOLA. You never said so.

CLAY. Mother said a boy in an architect's office had better wait till he was a part-

ner—but I can't wait, Viola, if other fellows are pushing me too hard.

VIOLA. (*Rises.*) Uncle Jack says you *are* a regular architect if there ever was one.

CLAY. It 's what *you* think that makes the difference to me.

VIOLA. Well, I think—(*Pause*)—Uncle Jack certainly *knows.*

CLAY. And an architect 's just as good as a lawyer.

VIOLA. Every bit.

CLAY. Viola. (*Takes her in his arms.*)

VIOLA. Now—I don't *mind* tellin' you—he was speakin' for himself—Frank Hardmuth.

CLAY. By Jove—on this very night.

VIOLA. Yes.

CLAY. Seems like the Hand of Providence that I was here. Let 's sit down. (*They sit.*) You 've got confidence in me, have n't you?

VIOLA. Yes—I 've always said to mother—Clay Whipple 'll make his mark some day—I should say I *had* confidence in you.

CLAY. Huh. (*Laughs.*) Of course the *big* jobs *pay.* Things like insurance buildings—but my heart 's in domestic architecture—and if you don't laugh at me, I 'll *tell* you something.

VIOLA. Laugh at you—about your work and your ambition! Why, Clay!

CLAY. I do most of the domestic interiors for the firm already—and whenever I plan a second floor or a staircase I can see *you* plain as day walkin' through the rooms—or saying good-night over the banisters.

VIOLA. Really? (CLAY *nods.*) You mean in your mind?

CLAY. No, with my eyes. Domestic architecture 's the most poetic work a man can get into outside of *downright* poetry itself.

VIOLA. It must be if you can *see* it all that way.

CLAY. Every room—I can see your short sleeves as you put your hands on the banisters—and sometimes you push up your front hair with the back of your hand that way— (*Brushes his forehead.*)

VIOLA. Oh, this—(*Repeats the gesture.*)—all girls do that.

CLAY. But not just the same way as you do it. Yes, sir! I can see every little motion *you* make.

VIOLA. Whenever you care to think about me.

CLAY. Bless you, no—that 's the trouble of it.

VIOLA. What trouble?

CLAY. The pictures of you—don't come just when I *want* them to come—and they don't go when I want them to go—especially in the dark.

VIOLA. Why, how funny.

CLAY. Sometimes I 've had to light the gas in order to go to sleep.

VIOLA. Why, I never heard of anything like that.

CLAY. Well, it happens with me often. I designed this room for your Uncle Jack—but before I put a brush in my color-box I saw this very Genoese velvet and the picture frames in their places—and that Corot right there—I 've got kind of a superstition about that picture.

VIOLA. (*Rises.*) A superstition!

(*Regards the Corot.*)

CLAY. I said to Jack, have anything else you want on the other walls, but right there I want you to put a Corot that I 've seen at a dealer's in New York—and he did it.

VIOLA. Uncle Jack generally has his own way about pictures.

CLAY. I only mean that he approved my taste in the matter—but my idea of this house really started *with*—and grew around that canvas of Corot's.

VIOLA. Then it is n't always *me* that you see?

CLAY. Always you when I think about a real house, you bet—a house for *me*—and you 'll be there, won't you?

(*Takes her in his arms.*)

VIOLA. Will I?

CLAY. Yes—say, "I will."

VIOLA. I will.

(*Reënter* ALICE *and* HELEN.)

ALICE. (*Astonished.*) Viola!

(VIOLA *goes left.*)

CLAY. I 've asked her—mother.

ALICE. Helen, you knew?

HELEN. Yes.

CLAY. (*To* ALICE.) And I asked Jack, too.

ALICE. You mean—

CLAY. We 're engaged—if you say it 's all right.

ALICE. And you—Viola?

VIOLA. (*Nodding.*) Yes—

ALICE. (*Going to chair left of table.*) Well, if Jack 's been consulted and you *all* know of it—I should make a very hopeless minority.

CLAY. Why any minority?

ALICE. Only the necessary considerations. (*To* HELEN.) Clay's prospects—his youth.

VIOLA. Why, he designs most of the work for his firm now.

CLAY. That is, dwellings.

HELEN. I should advise waiting—myself—until Clay is in the firm—(*To* CLAY.) And I did advise delay in speaking to Viola herself.

CLAY. I 'd 'a' waited, mother, only Frank Hardmuth proposed to Viola *to-night!*

ALICE. To-night?

VIOLA. At the opera.

ALICE. (*To* HELEN.) One is n't safe anywhere.

CLAY. You would n't want *him!* So you do consent, don't you?

ALICE. I think your mother and I should talk it over.

CLAY. Well, it 's a thing a fellow does n't usually ask his mother to arrange, but—(*Pause.*)

VIOLA. You mean privately?

ALICE. Yes.

CLAY. We can go to the billiard room, I suppose?

VIOLA. Come on.

CLAY. (*At the center door with* VIOLA.) You know, mother—how I feel about it. (*Exit with* VIOLA.)

HELEN. I supposed you had guessed it. (*Sits right of table.*)

ALICE. I had—but when the moment arrives after all, it 's such a surprise that a mother can't act naturally.

HELEN. Clay is really very trustworthy for his years.

ALICE. There 's only one thing to discuss. I have n't mentioned it because—well, because I 've seen so little of you since it began and because the fault is in my own family.

HELEN. Fault?

ALICE. Yes—Jack's fault—(*Pause.*) Clay is playing.

HELEN. You mean—

ALICE. Here with Jack's friends.

HELEN. Clay gambling!

ALICE. (*Wincing.*) I don't quite get used to the word, though we 've had a lifetime of it—(*Sits left of table.*) gambling.

HELEN. I should n't have thought Jack would do that—with *my* boy.

ALICE. Jack has n't our feminine viewpoint, Helen—and, besides, Jack is calloused to it.

HELEN. You should have talked to Jack yourself.

ALICE. Talked to him? I did much more—that is, as much more as a sister dependent on a brother for support could do. You know Jack really *built* this place for me and Viola.

HELEN. I 'd thought so—yes.

ALICE. Viola is the very core of Jack's heart—well, we both left the house and went into our little apartment and are there now. A woman can't do much more than that and still take her living from a man, can she?

HELEN. No—

ALICE. And it hurt him—hurt him past any idea.

HELEN. You did that because my Clay was—was playing here?

ALICE. Not entirely Clay—everybody! (*Pause—a distant burst of laughter comes from the men in the dining-room.*) There is n't a better-hearted man nor an abler one in the State than Jack Brookfield, but I had my daughter to consider. There were two nights under our last city government when nothing but the influence of Frank Hardmuth kept the police from coming to this house and arresting everybody—think of it.

HELEN. Dreadful—

ALICE. Now, that 's something, Helen, that I would n't tell a soul but you. *Viola* does n't know it—but Jack's card-playing came between you and him years ago and you—*may* know it. (*Rises and looks toward dining-room.*) You may even have some influence with Jack.

HELEN. I—ah, no.

ALICE. Yes—this supper to-night was Jack's idea for you. The box at the opera for you.

HELEN. Why, Jack did n't even sit with us.

ALICE. Also—for you—Jack Brookfield is a more notable character in Louisville to-day than he was twenty-two years ago. His company would have made you the subject of unpleasant comment. That 's why he left us alone in the box.

HELEN. Is n't it a pity—a terrible pity! (*Laughter off left.* HELEN *rises.*)

(*Enter* HARDMUTH, JACK, DENNING, *and* LEW. HARDMUTH *is the aggressive prosecutor.*)

HARDMUTH. I tell the gentlemen we 've left the ladies to themselves long enough, Mrs. Campbell.

ALICE. *Quite* long enough, Mr. Hardmuth.
DENNING. Where's the young lady? Jack's niece?
HELEN. In the billiard room, I believe.
DENNING. (*To* HELEN, *disappointed.*) Oh—Jack's been telling us what a great girl she is.
HARDMUTH. Some of us knew that without being told.
DENNING. And she's wonderfully like you—wonderfully.
HELEN. You compliment me—
JACK. Are you under the impression you're speaking to Viola's mother?
DENNING. Ain't I?
JACK. This lady is Mrs. Whipple.
DENNING. Oh, Clay's mother? (HELEN *bows.*) Well, your boy, Mrs. Whipple, plays in the hardest luck of all the people I ever sat next to.
HELEN. You mean—
JACK. (*Interrupting and putting his arm about* DENNING.) You depreciate yourself, Tom. There's no hard luck in merely sitting next to you.
DENNING. Ha, ha.
HELEN. (*To* ALICE.) I think Clay and I should be going.
JACK. (*Consulting his watch.*) Oh, no—only a little after twelve and no one ever goes to sleep here before two. (*To* DENNING.) I told you to keep still about card games.
DENNING. I meant unlucky at billiards. *They're* all right, ain't they?
JACK. Oh— (*Walks away impatiently.*)
DENNING. Let's go and see the young lady play billiards with Clay. (*To* ALICE.) I can see now your daughter resembles you.
(*Moves up with* ALICE *toward door.* LEW *follows.*)
JACK. Shall we join them?
HELEN. I'd like it.
(JACK *and* HELEN *start up.*)
HARDMUTH. Jack! Just a minute.
JACK. (*To* HELEN.) Excuse me—
DENNING. (*To* ALICE *as they go.*) No, Kansas City's my *home*, but I don't live there. (*Exit with* ALICE.)
JACK. Be right in, Lew.
(*Exit* HELEN *with* LEW.)
Well, Frank—
HARDMUTH. I took advantage of your hospitality, old man, to-night.
JACK. Advantage?
HARDMUTH. Yes—I've been talking to your niece.
JACK. Oh!
HARDMUTH. Proposed to her.
JACK. Yes?
HARDMUTH. Yes, Jack.
(*Enter* JO *at back, from downstairs.*)
JO. A gentleman called you on the telephone, sah.
JACK. (*Regarding watch.*) Who?
JO. Judge Brennus—name sounds like. Holdin' the wire, sah.
JACK. I don't know any Judge Brennus.
JO. Says you don't know him, sah, but he's got to leave town in the mornin' and he'd be very much obliged if you'd see him to-night.
JACK. Did you tell him we were dark to-night?
JO. He did n't want no game. It's about a picture—a picture *you've* got.
JACK. A picture?
JO. He wants to look at it.
(JACK *looks at* HARDMUTH.)
HARDMUTH. It's a blind.
JACK. (*Consulting watch.*) Well, this is a good night to work a blind on me. (*To* JO.) Tell the gentleman I'll be up for half an hour.
JO. Yes, sah. (*Exit.*)
JACK. So you proposed to Viola?
HARDMUTH. Yes. How do you feel about that?
JACK. You know the story of the barkeeper asking the owner, "Is Grady good for a drink?"—"Has he had it?"—"He has."—"He is."
HARDMUTH. Just that way, eh? JACK *nods.*) Well—she has n't answered me.
JACK. (*Musing.*) Ha—
HARDMUTH. And under those conditions, how's Grady's credit with you?
JACK. Well, Frank, on any *ordinary* proposition you're aces with me. You know that.
HARDMUTH. (*Seated right of table.*) But for the girl?
JACK. It's different.
HARDMUTH. Why?
JACK. She's only nineteen—you know.
HARDMUTH. My sister married at *eighteen.*
JACK. I mean *you're* thirty-five.
HARDMUTH. That's not an unusual difference.
JACK. Not an impossible difference, but I think unusual—and rather unadvisable.
HARDMUTH. That's what *you* think.
JACK. That's what I think.
HARDMUTH. But suppose the lady is willing to give that handicap? (*Pause—*

JACK *shrugs his shoulders.*) What then?

JACK. Let 's cross the bridge when we come to it.

HARDMUTH. You mean *you 'd* still drag a little?

JACK. (*Pause.*) Do you think Viola likes you well enough to say yes?

HARDMUTH. Let 's cross *that* bridge when we come to it.

JACK. We have come to that one, Frank. There 's another man in the running and I think she likes him.

HARDMUTH. You mean young Whipple? (*Rises, goes to fireplace.*) Well, he took second money in the box party to-night —at the supper table, too. I 'll agree to take care of him, if you 're with *me.*

JACK. (*At table, center.*) I think *he 's* your biggest opposition.

HARDMUTH. But you. Can I count on you in the show-down?

JACK. (*Pause. Sits right of table.*) If Viola did n't care enough for you, Frank. to accept you in spite of everything, I should n't try to influence her in your favor.

(*Enter* LEW, *center, from left.*)

LEW. I think a bum game of billiards is about as thin an entertainment for the outsiders as "Who 's got the button?"

HARDMUTH. (*Meeting* LEW *up left center.*) I 've got a little business, Lew, with Jack for a minute.

LEW. Well, I can sit in by the bottle, can't I? (*Moves towards dining-room.*)

JACK. Help yourself, Lew.

LEW. Such awful stage waits while they chalk their cues. (*Exit left.*)

HARDMUTH. But you would n't try to influence her against me.

JACK. (*Pause.*) She 's about the closest thing to me there *is*—that niece of mine.

HARDMUTH. (*Pause.*) Well?

JACK. I 'd protect her happiness to the limit of my ability.

HARDMUTH. If she likes me—or should come to like me—enough—her—happiness would be with *me,* would n't it? (*Sits again.*)

JACK. She might think so.

HARDMUTH. Well?

JACK. But she 'd be mistaken. It would be a mistake, old chap.

HARDMUTH. I know twenty men—twelve to fifteen years older than their wives—all happy—wives happy, too.

JACK. 'T is n't just that.

HARDMUTH. What is it?

JACK. She 's a fine girl—that nicce of mine—not a blemish.

HARDMUTH. Well—

JACK. I want to see her get the best—the very best—in family—position—character—

HARDMUTH. Anything against the Hardmuths? (JACK *shakes head.*) I 'm assistant district attorney—and next trip I 'll be *the* district attorney.

JACK. I said character.

HARDMUTH. Character?

JACK. Yes.

HARDMUTH. You mean there 's anything against my reputation?

JACK. No—I mean character pure and simple—I mean the moral side of you!

HARDMUTH. Well, by God!

JACK. You see, I 'm keeping the *girl* in mind all the time.

HARDMUTH. *My morals!*

JACK. Let 's say your moral fiber.

HARDMUTH. (*Rises.*) Well, for richness this beats anything I 've struck. Jack Brookfield talking to me about my moral fiber! (*Goes toward fire.*)

JACK. You asked for it.

HARDMUTH. (*Returns aggressively.*) Yes —I did, and now I 'm going to ask for the show-down. What do you mean by it?

JACK. (*With fateful repression.*) I mean —as long as you 've called attention to the "richness" of Jack Brookfield talking to you on the subject—that Jack Brookfield is a professional gambler—people get from Jack Brookfield just what he promises—a square game. Do you admit that?

HARDMUTH. I admit that. Go on.

JACK. (*Rises, front of table.*) You 're the assistant prosecuting attorney for the city of Louisville; the people *don't* get from you just what *you* promised—not by a jugful—

HARDMUTH. I 'm the *assistant* prosecuting attorney, remember—I promised to assist in prosecution, not to institute it.

JACK. I expect technical defense, old man, but this was to be a show-down.

HARDMUTH. Let 's have it—I ask for particulars.

JACK. Here 's one. You play *here* in my house and you know it 's against the law that you 've sworn to support.

HARDMUTH. I 'll support the law whenever it 's invoked. Indict me and I 'll plead guilty.

JACK. This evasion is what I mean by lack of moral fiber.

HARDMUTH. Perhaps we're a little shy somewhere on mental fiber.

JACK. You make me say it, do you, Frank? Your duty, at least, is to keep secret the information of your office; contrary to that duty you've betrayed the secrets of your office to warn me and other men of this city when their game was in danger from the police.

HARDMUTH. You *throw* that up to me?

JACK. (*Sits on left end of table.*) Throw nothing—you asked for it.

HARDMUTH. I stand by my friends.

JACK. Exactly—and you've taken an oath to stand by the people.

HARDMUTH. Do you know any sure politician that doesn't stand by his friends?

JACK. Not one.

HARDMUTH. Well, there!

JACK. But I don't know any sure politician that I'd tell my niece to marry.

HARDMUTH. That's a little too fine-haired for me! (*Turns to fire.*)

JACK. I think it is.

HARDMUTH. (*Returns.*) I'll bet you a thousand dollars I'm the next prosecuting attorney of this city.

JACK. I'll take half of that if you can place it. I'll bet even money you're anything in politics that you go after for the next ten years.

HARDMUTH. Then I don't understand your kick.

JACK. But I'll give odds that the time'll come when you're way up there—full of honor and reputation and pride—that somebody'll drop to you, Frank, and flosh! *You* for the down and outs.

HARDMUTH. Rot!

JACK. It's the same in every game in the world—the crook either gets too gay or gets too slow, or both, and the "come on" sees him make the pass. I've been pallbearer for three of the slickest men that ever shuffled a deck in Kentucky—just a little *too* slick, that's all—and they've always got it when it was hardest for the family.

HARDMUTH. So that'll be my finish, will it?

JACK. Sure.

HARDMUTH. (*Going back of table.*) You like the moral fiber of this Whipple kid?

JACK. I don't know.
(*Crosses to fireplace.*)

HARDMUTH. Weak as dishwater.

JACK. I don't think so.

HARDMUTH. I'll do him at any game you name.

JACK. He's only a boy—you should.

HARDMUTH. I'll do him at this game.

JACK. What game?

HARDMUTH. The girl! I thought I could count on you because—well, for the very tips you hold against me; but you're only her uncle, old man, after all.
(*Swaggers down right.*)

JACK. That's all.

HARDMUTH. And if she says "yes"—

JACK. Frank! (*Comes to front of table. Pause. The men confront each other.*) Some day the truth'll come out—as to who murdered the governor-elect of this State.

HARDMUTH. Is there any doubt about that?

JACK. Is n't there?

HARDMUTH. The man who fired that shot's in jail.

JACK. I don't want my niece mixed up in it.

HARDMUTH. (*Angrily.*) What do you mean by that?

(*Enter* HELEN, *center. An awkward pause.*)

The young people still playing?

HELEN. Yes.

HARDMUTH. I'll look 'em over. (*Exit.*)

HELEN. Won't you come, too?

JACK. I'd rather stay here with you.

HELEN. That gentleman that called after supper—

JACK. Mr. Denning—

HELEN. Yes. He seems to take pleasure in annoying Clay—

JACK. (*Seriously.*) Yes—I know that side of Denning (*Goes to door of dining-room.*) Lew!

LEW. Yes.

JACK. I wish you'd go into the billiard room and look after Tom Denning.

LEW. (*Entering left.*) What's he doing?
(JACK *turns to* HELEN.)

HELEN. (*To* JACK.) Commenting humorously—hiding the chalk and so on.

LEW. (*As he goes up.*) Lit up a little I suppose.

JACK. (*Nodding.*) Just "ride herd"[1] on him. (*Exit* LEW.)

HELEN. (*Going left to sofa.*) He does n't seem much of a gentleman, this Mr. Denning.

JACK. He was n't expected to-night.

[1] "Take care of," in the sense of a cowboy who rounds up the herd and keeps them out of mischief.

HELEN. Is he one of your "clients"?

JACK. (*Smiling.*) One of my *"clients"*?

HELEN. Clay meets him here?

JACK. Yes—*has* met him here.

HELEN. I did n't think you 'd do that—Jack—with *my* boy.

JACK. Do what?

HELEN. Gamble.

JACK. (*Smiling.*) It 's no gamble with your boy, Helen—sure thing. He has n't won a dollar!

HELEN. I 'm glad you 're able to smile over it.

JACK. Perhaps it would be more humorous to you if he 'd won.

HELEN. If he plays—I 'd rather see him win, of course.

JACK. (*Beside sofa.*) That 's what puts me in the *business*—winning. The thing that makes every gambler stick to it is winning occasionally. I 've never let your boy get up from the table a dollar to the good and because he *was* your boy.

HELEN. Why let him play at all?

JACK. He 'll play somewhere till he gets sick of it—or marries.

HELEN. Will marriage cure it?

JACK. It would have cured me—but you did n't see it that way.

HELEN. You made your choice.

JACK. I asked you to trust me—you wanted some ironclad pledge—well, my dear Helen—that was n't the best way to handle a fellow of spirit.

(*Goes front of table.*)

HELEN. So *you* chose the better way?

JACK. No choice—I stood pat—that 's all.

HELEN. And wasted your life.

JACK. (*Sitting on edge of table.*) That depends on how you look at it. You married a doctor who wore himself out in the Philadelphia hospitals. I 've had three meals a day—and this place—and—a pretty fat farm and a stable with some good blood in it—and—

HELEN. (*Coming to him.*) And every one of them. Jack, is a monument to the worst side of you.

JACK. (*Stands and takes her hands; he smiles.*) Prejudice, my dear Helen. You might say that, if I 'd earned these things in some respectable business combination that starved out all its little competitors—but I 've simply furnished a fairly expensive entertainment—to eminent citizens—looking for rest.

HELEN. I know all the arguments of your—profession—Jack, and I don't pretend to answer them any more than I answer the arguments of reckless women who claim that they are more commendable than their sisters who make loveless marriages.

JACK. (*Goes to chair, right.*) I 'm not flattered by the implied comparison—still—

HELEN. I only feel sure that anything which the majority of good people condemn is wrong. (*Sits left of table.*)

JACK. (*Sits right of table.*) I 'm sorry—

HELEN. I 'd be glad if you meant that—but you 're not sorry.

JACK. I *am* sorry—I 'm sorry not to have public respect—as long as you think it 's valuable.

HELEN. I amuse you—don't I?

JACK. (*Elbows on knees.*) Not a little bit—but you make me blue as the devil, if that 's any satisfaction.

HELEN. I 'd be glad to make you blue as the devil, Jack, if it meant discontent with what you 're doing—if it could make you do better.

JACK. I 'm a pretty old leopard to get nervous about my spots.

HELEN. Why are you blue?

JACK. You.

HELEN. In what way?

JACK. I had hoped that twenty years of charitable deeds had made you also charitable in your judgment.

HELEN. I hope it has.

JACK. Don't seem to ease up on my specialty.

HELEN. You called your conduct "wild oats" twenty years ago.

JACK. It was—but I found such an excellent market for my wild oats that I had to stay in that branch of the grain business. Besides, it has been partly your fault, you know.

(HELEN *plays with the ivory paper-knife, balancing it on the front edge of table.*)

HELEN. Mine?

JACK. Your throwing me over for my wild oats—put it up to me to prove that they were a better thing than you thought.

HELEN. Well—having demonstrated that—

JACK. Here we are—

HELEN. Yes—here we are.

JACK. Back in the old town. Don't you think it would be rather a pretty finish, Helen, if despite all my—my leopard's spots—and despite that—(*pause*)—that Philadelphia episode of yours—

HELEN. You call twenty years of marriage episodic?

JACK. I call any departure from the main story episodic.

HELEN. And the main story is—

JACK. You and I—

HELEN. Oh—

(*Paper-knife falls to floor*—JACK *rises and picks it up, stands in front of table left hand on* HELEN'S—*his right gesticulating with paper-knife.*)

JACK. Would n't it be a pretty finish if you took my hand and I could walk right up to the camera and say, "I told you so"—? You know I always felt that you were coming back.

HELEN. Oh, did you?

JACK. (*Playfully, and going right center.*) Had a candle burning in the window every night.

HELEN. You're sure it was n't a red light?

JACK. (*Remonstrating.*) Dear Helen! have some poetry in your composition. Literally "red light" of course—but the real flame was here—(*hand on breast*)—a flickering hope that somewhere—somehow—somewhen I should be at rest—with the proud Helen that loved and—rode away.

HELEN. (*Almost accusingly.*) I—believe—you.

JACK. Of course you believe me.

HELEN. You had a way, Jack—when you were a boy at college, of making me write to you.

JACK. Had I? (*Goes back of table.*)

HELEN. You know you had—at nights—about this hour—I 'd find it impossible to sleep until I 'd got up and written to you—and two days later I 'd get from you a letter that had crossed mine on the road. I don't believe the word "telepathy" had been coined then—but I guessed something of the force—and all these years, I 've felt it—nagging! Nagging!

JACK. Nagging?

HELEN. Yes—I could not keep you out of my waking hours—out of my thought—but when I surrendered myself to sleep the *call* would come—and I think it was rather cowardly of you, really.

JACK. (*Back of table.*) I plead guilty to having thought of you, Helen—lots—and it was generally when I was alone—late—my—clients gone. This room—

"Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed."

HELEN. And as you say—here we are.

JACK. Well, what of my offer? Shall we say to the world—"We told you so?" What of my picturesque finish?

HELEN. You know my ideas—you 've known them twenty-two years.

JACK. No modification?

HELEN. None!

JACK. I 'll be willing to sell the tables. (*Points above to second floor.*) And—well—I don't think I could get interested in this bridge game that the real good people play—would you object to a gentleman's game of "draw" now and then?

HELEN. You called it a gentleman's game in those days.

JACK. No leeway at all?

HELEN. No compromise, Jack—no—

JACK. M—(*Pause.*) I trust you won't consider my seeming hesitation uncomplimentary?

HELEN. Not unprecedented, at least.

JACK. You see it opens up a new line of thought—and—

(*Passing his hand over forehead.*)

HELEN. (*Rising in sympathy.*) And you have a headache, too—it is n't kind I 'm sure.

(*Enter* JO.)

JACK. Oh, nothing—nothing. (*To* JO.) Well?

JO. That gentleman, sah, about the picture.

JACK. I 'll see him. (*Exit* JO.)

HELEN. A caller?

JACK. Won't be a minute—don't go away, because I think we can settle this question to-night, you and I.

HELEN. Please don't put me in the light of waiting for an answer.

JACK. Dear Helen—we 're both past that—are n't we? If I can only be sure that I could be worthy of you. I 'm the one that 's waiting for an answer—from my own weak character and rotten irresolution.

(JACK *goes with* HELEN *to door, center, kisses her hand. She goes;* JACK *retains her hand as long as possible and when he lets it go, it falls limply to* HELEN'S *side as she disappears.*)

They say cards make a fellow superstitious. (*Pause.*) Well—I—guess they do—

(*Enter* Jo *and* Justice Prentice. Prentice *wears overcoat, carries cane and silk hat.*)

Jack. Judge de Brennus?

Prentice. (*After amused look at* Jo.) Justice Prentice. (*Exit* Jo.)

Jack. Oh, Justice Prentice! Good-evening!

Prentice. You are Mr. Brookfield?

Jack. Yes.

Prentice. I should n't have attempted so late a call but that a friend pointed you out to-night at the opera, Mr. Brookfield, and said that your habit was—well—

Jack. Not to retire immediately?

Prentice. Yes.

Jack. Will you be seated?

Prentice. I 'm only passing through the city. I called to see a Corot that I understand you bought from Knoedler.

Jack. That 's it.

Prentice. Oh—thank you. (*Starts.*) You don't object to my looking at it?

Jack. Not at all.

(*Touches button, light shows on picture.*)

Prentice. (*After regard.*) That 's it. (*Pause.*) I thought at one time that I would buy this picture.

Jack. You know it, then?

Prentice. Yes. (*Pause.*) Are you particularly attached to it, Mr. Brookfield?

Jack. (*Sitting.*) I think not irrevocably.

(*Takes pad of paper and figures mechanically.*)

Prentice. Oh. (*Pause, during which the* Justice *looks at the picture.*) Do I understand that is what you paid for it, or what you intend to ask me for it?

(Jack *starts.*)

Jack. What?

Prentice. Sixty-five hundred.

Jack. (*Astonished.*) I did n't speak the price, did I?

Prentice. Did n't you—oh. (*Pause.*) I could n't pay that amount.

Jack. (*Puzzled.*) That 's its price—however.

Prentice. I regret I did n't buy it from the dealer when I had my chance. (*Looks about at other pictures on back wall.*) I could n't have given it so beautiful a setting, Mr. Brookfield, nor such kindred—but it would not have been friendless—(*At fireplace.*) That 's a handsome marine.

Jack. Yes.

Prentice. Pretty idea I read recently in an essay of Dr. van Dyke's. His pictures were for him his windows by which he looked out from his study onto the world. (*Pause.*) Yes?

Jack. Quite so.

Prentice. (*Regarding a picture over dining-room door.*) M— Washington!

Jack. (*Again astonished.*) What?

Prentice. My home is Washington—I thought you asked me?

Jack. No, I did n't.

Prentice. I beg your pardon—

Jack. (*Front of table; aside.*) But I 'm damned if I was n't going to ask him.

Prentice. (*Viewing other pictures.*) And the phases of your world, Mr. Brookfield, have been very prettily multiplied.

Jack. Thank you—may I offer you a cigar? (*Opens box on table.*)

Prentice. Thank you, I won't smoke.

Jack. Or a glass of wine?

Prentice. Nothing. I 'll return to the hotel—first asking you again to excuse my untimely call.

Jack. I wish you 'd sit down awhile.

Prentice. But I did n't know until I 'd missed it from Knoedler's how large a part of my world—my dream world—I had been looking at through this frame.

(*Regards the Corot again.*)

Jack. Well, if it 's a sentimental matter, Mr. Justice, we might talk it over.

Prentice. I must n't submit the sentimental side of it, Mr. Brookfield, and where I have so—so intruded.

Jack. That 's the big side of anything for me—the sentimental.

Prentice. I 'm sure of it—and I must n't take advantage of that knowledge.

Jack. You 're sure of it?

Prentice. Yes.

Jack. Is that my reputation?

Prentice. I don't know your reputation.

Jack. Then, how are you sure of it?

Prentice. (*Impressively.*) Oh—I see you—and—well, we have *met.*

Jack. Ah—

Prentice. Good-night. (*Going up.*)

Jack. One moment. (*Pause.*) You said your address was Washington?

Prentice. Yes.

Jack. You thought at the time I was about to ask you that question?

Prentice. I thought you had asked it.

Jack. And you thought a moment before I had said sixty-five hundred for the picture?

Prentice. Yes.

JACK. Do you often—pick answers that way?

PRENTICE. Well, I think we all do—at times.

JACK. We all do?

PRENTICE. Yes—but we speak the answers only as we get older and less attentive and mistake a person's thought for his spoken word.

JACK. A person's thought?

PRENTICE. Yes.

JACK. Do you mean you know what I think?

PRENTICE. (*Returning to table.*) I had n't meant to claim any monopoly of that power. It 's my opinion that every one reads the thoughts of others—that is, some of the thoughts.

JACK. Every one?

PRENTICE. Oh, yes.

JACK. That *I* do?

PRENTICE. (*Regarding him.*) I should say *you* more generally than the majority of men.

JACK. There was a woman said something like that to me not ten minutes ago.

PRENTICE. A woman would be apt to be conscious of it.

JACK. You really believe that—that stuff? (*Sits left of table.*)

PRENTICE. Oh, yes—and I 'm not a pioneer in the belief. The men who declare the stuff most stoutly are scientists who have given it most attention.

JACK. How do they prove it?

PRENTICE. They *don't* prove it—that is, not universally. Each man must do that for himself, Mr. Brookfield.

JACK. How—

PRENTICE. (*Pause. Smiles.*) Well, I 'll tell you all I know of it. (*Becoming serious.*) Every thought is active—that is, born of a desire—and travels from us—or it is born of the desire of some one else and comes to us. We send them out—or we take them in—that is all.

JACK. How do we know which we are doing?

PRENTICE. If we are idle and empty-headed, our brains are the playrooms for the thought of others—frequently rather bad. If we are active, whether benevolently or malevolently, our brains are workshops—*power-houses.* I was passively regarding the pictures; your active idea of the price—registered, that 's all—so did your wish to know where I was from.

JACK. You say "*our* brains"—do you still include mine?

PRENTICE. Yes.

JACK. You said mine more than the majority of men's.

PRENTICE. I think so.

JACK. Why has n't this whatever it is—effect—happened to me, then?

PRENTICE. It has.

JACK. (*Pause.*) Why did n't I know it?

PRENTICE. Vanity? Perhaps.

JACK. Vanity?

PRENTICE. Yes—often some—friend has broached some independent subject and you have said, "I was just about to speak of that myself."

JACK. Very often, but—

PRENTICE. Believing the idea was your own—your vanity shut out the probably proper solution—that it was his.

JACK. Well, how, then, does a man tell which of his thoughts are his own?

PRENTICE. It 's difficult. Most of his idle ones are not. When we drift we are with the current. To go against it or to make even an eddy of our own we must swim—Most everything less than that is hopeless.

JACK. (*Smiling.*) Well—I have n't been exactly helpless.

PRENTICE. No one would call you so, Mr. Brookfield. (*Going.*) You have a strong psychic—a strong hypnotic ability.

JACK. (*Smiling.*) You think so?

PRENTICE. I know it.

JACK. This business?

(*Makes slight pass after manner of the professional hypnotist.*)

PRENTICE. (*Smiling.*) That business for the beginner, yes—

JACK. You mean that I could hypnotize anybody?

PRENTICE. Many persons—yes—but I would n't do it if I were you—

JACK. Why not?

PRENTICE. Grave responsibility.

JACK. In what way?

PRENTICE. (*Pause. Smiles.*) I 'll send you a book about it—if I may.

JACK. Instructions?

PRENITCE. And cautions—yes—(*Goes up to picture again.*) If you tire of your Corot, I 'd be glad to hear from you.

JACK. Why could n't I save postage by just *thinking* another price?

PRENTICE. The laws on contracts have n't yet recognized that form of tender.

(*Enter* TOM, *center. He laughs and shows signs of drink.*)

TOM. I say, Jack—here's the greatest joke you ever saw—(*Sees the* JUSTICE.) Oh, excuse me.

(*Enter* LEW, *following.*)

LEW. That won't do, Tom.—(*To* JACK.) Excuse me, Jack, but I had to get him out of there.

JACK. I'll go downstairs with you, Mr. Justice. (*Exit with the* JUSTICE.)

TOM. Who's that old bird?

LEW. You'll offend Jack if you're not careful, Tom. You've got half a jag now.

TOM. J' ever see anything's as funny as that? He don't like my scarf-pin—ha, ha—well I don't like it—but my valet put it on me and what's difference—

(*Enter* HARDMUTH.)

HARDMUTH. What was that?

TOM. My scarf-pin!

HARDMUTH. Scarf-pin?

TOM. Yes—he pushed me away from him and I said what's matter. He said I don't like your scarf-pin—ha, ha—I said don't? I don't like your face.

LEW. Very impolite with the ladies there.

HARDMUTH. Why should he criticize Tom's scarf-pin?

TOM. 'Zactly. I said I can change my scarf-pin—but I don't like your face.

(*Enter* CLAY *from dining-room, excitedly.*)

CLAY. Where's Jack?

LEW. Saying good-night to some old gentleman below.

TOM. (*Interposing as* CLAY *starts up left center.*) And I don't like your face.

CLAY. That's all right, Mr. Denning. (*Tries to pass.*) Excuse me.

TOM. (*With scarf-pin in hand.*) Excuse *me.* What's the matter with that scarf-pin?

CLAY. It's a cat's-eye and I don't like them, that's all—I don't like to look at them.

LEW. Let him alone, Tom.

TOM. Damn 'f 'ee ain't scared of it, ha, ha!

(*Pushing pin in front of* CLAY'S *face.*)

CLAY. (*Greatly excited.*) Don't do that.

HARDMUTH. (*Sneering.*) 'T won't bite you, will it?

CLAY. (*Averts his face.*) Go away, I tell you.

TOM. (*Holds* CLAY *with left hand. Has pin in right.*) 'T will bite him—bow—wow—wow—

CLAY. Don't, I tell you—don't.

TOM. (*Still holding him.*) Bow—wow—wow—

LEW. Tom!

HARDMUTH. (*Laughing.*) Let them alone.

CLAY. Go away.

TOM. Bow—wow—

(*Enter* JACK.)

JACK. What's the matter here?

TOM. (*Pursuing* CLAY.) Wow—

(CLAY *in frenzy swings the large ivory paper-knife from table, blindly strikes* TOM, *who falls.*)

JACK. Clay!

CLAY. (*Horrified.*) He pushed that horrible cat's-eye right against my face.

JACK. What cat's-eye?

HARDMUTH. (*Picks up the pin which* DENNING *has dropped.*) Only playing with him—a scarf-pin.

LEW. (*Kneeling by* DENNING.) He's out, Jack.

(*Enter* JO.)

CLAY. I did n't mean to hurt him; really I did n't mean that.

HARDMUTH. (*Taking the paper-cutter from* CLAY.) The hell you did n't. You could kill a bull with that ivory tusk.

JACK. Put him on the window seat—give him some air.

(*Enter* ALICE, *left center.*)

ALICE. Jack, we're going now—all of us.

(*Enter* HARVEY.)

JACK. (*Turning to* ALICE.) Wait a minute. (*To* JO.) Help Mr. Ellinger there.

(JO, LEW, *and* HARVEY *carry off* TOM *into the dining-room.*)

ALICE. What is it?

JACK. An accident—keep Helen and Viola out of these rooms.

ALICE. Had n't we better go? Clay is with us.

CLAY. I can't go just now, Mrs. Campbell—(*Looks off.*) I hope it is n't serious—I did n't mean to hurt him, really. (*Exit left.*)

ALICE. A quarrel?

(LEW *enters and waves hand, meaning "All over."*)

HARDMUTH. (*With paper-knife.*) A murder!

(*Enter* HELEN *and* VIOLA.)

VIOLA. What 's the matter?

(*Enter* CLAY.)

CLAY. (*In panic and up right center. To* HELEN.) Oh, mother, I 've killed him.

HELEN. (*Taking* CLAY *in her arms.*) Killed him—whom?

HARDMUTH. Tom Denning.

CLAY. But I never meant it—Jack; I just struck—struck wild.

HARDMUTH. With this.

HELEN. With that! Oh, my boy!

JACK. That will do! Everybody—Lew, telephone Dr. Monroe it 's an emergency case and to come in dressing-gown and slippers. (*Exit* LEW, *right center.*) Alice, I know you 're not afraid of a sick man—or—that sort of thing. Help me and Jo. (*Leads* ALICE, *left. She braces herself.*) Viola, you take Mrs. Whipple upstairs and wait there.

HARDMUTH. (*Starting up right.*) I 'll notify the police.

HELEN. Oh!

JACK. (*Interposing.*) *Stop!* You 'll stay just where you are!

HARDMUTH. You tryin' to hide this thing?

JACK. The doctor 'll tell us exactly what this thing is. And then the boy 'll have the credit himself *of notifying the police.*

ACT SECOND.

SCENE. *The library-living room of* JUSTICE PRENTICE, *Washington, D. C.*

The walls of this room are bookcases glassed quite to the ceiling, and filled with books mostly in sheepskin binding. This array is broken by a large bay window at the back, center, which is equipped with a window seat, and by two doors near the front of the stage, one on the right and one on the left.

At the left is also a fireplace with a log fire. In the upper left-hand corner of the room there is a buffet, fitted with glasses and decanters. A dark rug is on the floor.

The furniture of the room is dark oak in Gothic. It consists of a table and three chairs at the center, sofa and smaller table up right. The smaller table holds a lamp.

Over the buffet there is a small canvas by Rousseau showing a sunset.

JUSTICE PRENTICE *and* JUDGE HENDERSON *are playing chess.*

HENDERSON. Checkmate in three moves.

PRENTICE. I don't see that.

HENDERSON. Well, Knight to—

PRENTICE. Yes, yes, I see. Checkmate in three moves. That 's one game each. Shall we play another?

HENDERSON. Let us look at the enemy. (*Draws watch.*) By Jove! Quarter of twelve. I guess Mrs. Henderson will be expecting me soon. (*Pause.*) I 'll play a rubber with you, and its result shall decide your position on the Whipple case.

PRENTICE. Why, Mr. Justice, I 'm surprised at you. A United States Supreme Court decision—shaped by a game of chess. We 'll be down to the level of the intelligent jurymen soon—flipping pennies for the verdict.

HENDERSON. And a very good method in just such cases as this. Well, if you won't play—(*rises*)—I 'll have to go.

PRENTICE. (*Rises.*) Not without another toddy.

HENDERSON. Yes.

PRENTICE. (*At sideboard up left.*) Oh, no. Come, now, don't you like this liquor?

HENDERSON. Immensely. Where did you say you got it?

PRENTICE. Kentucky. One lump?

HENDERSON. Only one!

PRENTICE. My old home, sir,—and a bit of lemon?

HENDERSON. A piece of the peel—yes.

PRENTICE. They make it there.

HENDERSON. I 'll pour the water.

PRENTICE. There, there, don't drown me.

HENDERSON. My folks were Baptists, you see. What do you say it costs you?

PRENTICE. Fifty cents a gallon.

HENDERSON. What!! I think I 'll take water. (*Puts down glass.*)

PRENTICE. That 's what it cost me. Its value I don't know. An old friend sends it to me. Fifty cents for express.

HENDERSON. Oh!

PRENTICE. That 's different, is n't it?

HENDERSON. (*Recovers glass.*) Very!

PRENTICE. He makes it down there. Why, it 's in the same county in which this Whipple murder occurred.

HENDERSON. How about that point? We might as well admit it and remand the case.

PRENTICE. No. There 's no constitutional point involved.

HENDERSON. A man 's entitled to an open trial.

PRENTICE. Well, Whipple had it.

HENDERSON. No, he did n't. They would n't admit the public.

PRENTICE. Oh, come now; the court-room was crowded and the Judge refused admission to others—only when there was danger of the floor breaking.

HENDERSON. But, my dear Mr. Justice, that would have been all right to limit the attendance—

PRENTICE. Well, that 's all he did.

HENDERSON. Only he did it by having the sheriff issue tickets of admission. That placed the attendance entirely in the control of the prosecution and the defense is right in asking a rehearing.

PRENTICE. Oh, nonsense! Justice is a little too slow in my old State and I 'm impatient with technical delays. It is two years since they openly assassinated the governor-elect and the guilty man is still at large.

HENDERSON. Why should the killing of Scovill bear on this case!

PRENTICE. It bears on me. I 'm concerned for the fair fame of Kentucky.

HENDERSON. Well, if you won't, you won't and there 's an end of it.

(*Rings call bell.*)

PRENTICE. Have another?

HENDERSON. Not another drop.

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

Get my coat!

PRENTICE. A nightcap.

SERVANT. I beg pardon, sir.

PRENTICE. Speaking to the Justice.

(*Exit* SERVANT.)

HENDERSON. No, I must n't. Mrs. Henderson filed her protest against my coming home loaded and I 've got to be moderate.

PRENTICE. Well, if you won't, you won't.

HENDERSON. (*Front of table, picks up book.*) Hello! Reading the Scriptures in your old age?

PRENTICE. It does look like a Bible, does n't it? That 's a flexible binding I had put on a copy of Bret Harte. I admire him very much.

HENDERSON. I like some of his stuff.

PRENTICE. When I get home from the Capitol and you prosy lawyers, I 'm too tired to read Browning and those heavy guns, so I take Bret Harte—very clever, I think; I was reading before you came —(*takes book*)—"A Newport Romance." Do you know it?

HENDERSON. I don't think I do.

PRENTICE. It 's about an old house at Newport—that 's haunted—a young girl in the colonial days dies of a broken heart in this house, it seems. Her sweetheart sailed away and left her—and here 's the way Bret Harte tells of her coming back. (HENDERSON *sits.*) Oh, I 'm not going to read all of it to you—only one verse. (*Looks at book.—Pause.*) Oh, I forgot to tell you that when this chap left the girl he gave her a little bouquet—understand? That 's a piece of material evidence necessary to this summing up.

(HENDERSON *nods.* PRENTICE *reads.*)

"And ever since then when the clock strikes two,
She walks unbidden from room to room,
And the air is filled, that she passes through,
With a subtle, sad perfume.

The delicate odor of mignonette,
The ghost of a dead-and-gone bouquet,
Is all that tells of her story; yet
Could she think of a sweeter way?"

Is n't that charming, eh?

HENDERSON. A very pretty idea.

PRENTICE. Beautiful to have a perfume suggest her. I suppose it appeals to me especially because I used to know a girl who was foolishly fond of mignonette.

HENDERSON. Well, you don't believe in that stuff, do you?

PRENTICE. What stuff?

HENDERSON. That Bret Harte stuff—the dead coming back—ghosts and so forth?

PRENTICE. Yes, in one way I do. I find as I get older, Judge, that the things of memory become more real every day—every day. Why, there are companions of my boyhood that I have n't thought of for years—that seem to come about me—more tangibly, or as much so as they were in life.

HENDERSON. Well, how do you account for that? Spiritualism?

PRENTICE. Oh, no. It 's Time's perspective.

HENDERSON. Time's perspective?

PRENTICE. Yes. (*Pause.*) I 'll have to illustrate my meaning. (*Indicates painting.*) Here 's a sunset by Rousseau. I bought it in Paris last summer. Do you see what an immense stretch of land there is in it?

HENDERSON. Yes.

PRENTICE. A bird's-eye view of tha

would require a chart reaching to the ceiling. But see Rousseau's perspective. The horizon line is n't two inches from the base.

HENDERSON. Well?

PRENTICE. (*Returns to table.*) Well, my dear Judge, that is the magic in the perspective of Time. My boyhood's horizon is very near to my old eyes now. The dimmer they grow, the nearer it comes, until I think sometimes that when we are through with it all—we go out almost as we entered—little children.

HENDERSON. (*Pause.*) That 's a very beautiful painting, Judge—a Russell, you say?

PRENTICE. A Rousseau.

HENDERSON. Oh—

PRENTICE. Yes—cost me three thousand only, and a funny thing about it: the canvas just fitted into the top of my steamer trunk, and it came through the custom-house without a cent of duty. I completely forgot it.

HENDERSON. Your memory is n't so retentive, then, as it seems?

PRENTICE. Not on those commercial matters.

(*Enter* SERVANT *with coat. In crossing front of table to* HENDERSON, *the coat knocks a miniature from the table to the floor.*)

PRENTICE. You dropped your tobacco-box, I guess, Mr. Justice.

HENDERSON. (*Examines pocket.*) No.

SERVANT. (*Picks up miniature.*) It was this picture, sir.

PRENTICE. My gracious—my gracious! It might have been broken.

SERVANT. Oh, it often falls when I 'm dusting, sir.

PRENTICE. Oh, does it? Well, I 'll put it away. (*Exit* SERVANT.) An ivory miniature by Wimar. I prize it highly —old-fashioned portrait, see! Gold back.

HENDERSON. A beautiful face.

PRENTICE. (*Eagerly.*) Is n't it? Is n't it?

(*Looks over* HENDERSON'S *shoulder.*)

HENDERSON. Very. What a peculiar way of combing the hair—long, and over the ears.

PRENTICE. The only becoming way women ever wore their hair. I think the scrambly style they have now is disgraceful.

HENDERSON. Your mother?

PRENTICE. Dear, no, a young girl I used to know. Oh, don't smile, she 's been dead a *good* thirty years—married and had a large family.

HENDERSON. Very sweet—very sweet, indeed.

PRENTICE. Is n't it?

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

Well?

SERVANT. Card, sir.

PRENTICE. Gentleman here?

(*Takes card.*)

SERVANT. Yes, sir.

PRENTICE. I 'll see him. (*Exit* SERVANT.)

HENDERSON. Call?

PRENTICE. Yes. The man owns a picture that I 've been trying to buy—a Corot.

HENDERSON. Oh—another of these perspective fellows?

PRENTICE. Yes—his call does n't surprise me, for he 's been in my mind all day.

HENDERSON. Seems to be in a hurry for the money—coming at midnight.

PRENTICE. I set him the example—besides, midnight is just the shank of the evening for Mr. Brookfield. He 's supposed to be a sporting man—ahem.

(*Enter* SERVANT *and* JACK. JACK *is paler and less physical than in first act.*)

PRENTICE. Good-evening.

JACK. You remember me, Mr. Justice?

PRENTICE. Perfectly, Mr. Brookfield—this is Justice Henderson.

HENDERSON. Mr. Brookfield.

JACK. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Justice. (*To* PRENTICE.) I hope I 'm not intruding.

HENDERSON. I 'm just going, Mr. Brookfield. (*To* PRENTICE.) To-morrow?

PRENTICE. To-morrow!

HENDERSON. (*At door, inquiringly.*) No constitutional point about it? Eh?

PRENTICE. None.

HENDERSON. Good-night.

PRENTICE. Good-night. (*To* JACK.) Have a chair.

JACK. Thank you.

(*Stands by chair left of table.*)

PRENTICE. (*Toward buffet.*) I 've some medicine here that comes directly from your city.

JACK. I don't think I will—if you 'll excuse me.

PRENTICE. Ah—(*Pause. Smiles.*) Well, have you brought the picture?

JACK. The picture is still in Louisville—I—I 'm in Washington with my niece.

PRENTICE. Yes?

JACK. And—a lady friend of hers. They 're very anxious to meet you, Mr. Justice.

PRENTICE. Ah. (*Pause.*) Well—I go to the Capitol at noon to-morrow and—

JACK. To-night!—They 're leaving the city to-morrow—as you were when I had the pleasure of receiving you.

PRENTICE. I remember.

JACK. (*With watch.*) They were to come after me in five minutes if I did n't return, and those five minutes, Mr. Justice, I hoped you would give to me.

PRENTICE. With pleasure.

(*Sits right of table.*)

JACK. (*Plunging at once into his subject.*) Those two books you sent me—

PRENTICE. Yes?

JACK. I want to thank you for them again—and to ask you how far you go—with the men that wrote them—especially the second one. Do you believe that book?

PRENTICE. Yes.

JACK. You do?

PRENTICE. I do. I know the man who wrote it—and I believe him.

JACK. Did he ever do any of his stunts for you—that he writes about?

PRENTICE. He did n't call them "stunts," but he has given me many demonstrations of his ability—and mine.

JACK. For example?

PRENTICE. For example? He asked me to think of him steadily at some unexpected time and to think of some definite thing. A few days later—this room—two o'clock in the morning—I concentrated my thoughts—I mentally pictured him going to his telephone and calling me.

JACK. And did he do it?

PRENTICE. No—(*pause*)—but he came here at my breakfast hour and told me that at two o'clock he had waked and risen from his bed—and walked to his 'phone in the hallway with an *impulse* to call me—and then had stopped—because he had no message to deliver and because he thought his imagination might be tricking him.

JACK. You had n't given him any tip, such as asking him how he 'd slept?

PRENTICE. None. Five nights after that I repeated the experiment.

JACK. Well?

PRENTICE. That time he called me.

JACK. What did he say?

PRENTICE. He said, "Old man, you ought to be in bed asleep and not disturbing honest citizens," which was quite true.

JACK. By Jove, it 's a devilish creepy business, is n't it?

PRENTICE. Yes.

JACK. And if it 's so—

PRENTICE. And it *is* so.

JACK. Pay a man to be careful what he thinks—eh?

PRENTICE. It will very well pay your type of man to do so.

JACK. I don't want to be possessed by any of these bughouse theories, but I 'll be blamed if a few things have n't happened to me, Mr. Justice, since you started me on this subject.

PRENTICE. Along this line?

JACK. Yes. (*Pause.*) And I 've tried the other side of it, too.

PRENTICE. What other side?

JACK. The mesmeric business. (*Pause. Makes passes.*) I can do it.

PRENTICE. Then I should say, Mr. Brookfield, that for you the obligation for clean and unselfish thinking was doubly imperative.

JACK. Within this last year I 've put people—well—practically asleep in a chair and I 've made them tell me what a boy was doing—a mile away—in a jail.

PRENTICE. I see no reason to call clairvoyance a "bughouse" theory.

JACK. I only know that I do it.

PRENTICE. Yes—you have the youth for it—the glorious strength. Does it make any demand on your vitality?

JACK. (*Passes hand over his eyes.*) I 've fancied that a headache to which I 'm subject is more frequent—that 's all.

PRENTICE. But you find the ability—the power—increases—don't you?

JACK. Yes—in the last month I 've put a man into a hypnotic sleep with half a dozen waves of the hand. (*Makes pass.*)

PRENTICE. Why any motion?

JACK. Fixed his attention, I suppose.

PRENTICE. (*Shaking head.*) Fixes your attention. When in your own mind your belief is sufficiently trained, you won't need this. (*Another slight pass.*)

JACK. I won't?

PRENTICE. No.

JACK. What 'll I do?

PRENTICE. Simply think. (*Pause.*) You have a headache, for example.

JACK. I have a headache for a fact.

(JACK *again passes hand over eyes and forehead.*)

PRENTICE. Well—some persons could cure it by rubbing your forehead.

JACK. I know that.

PRENTICE. Others could cure it by the passes of the hypnotist. Others by simply willing that it should—(*pause*)—*be cured.*

JACK. Well, that's where I can't follow you—and your friend the author.

PRENTICE. You simply think your headache.

JACK. I know it aches.

PRENTICE. I think it does n't.

JACK. (*Astonished.*) What?

PRENTICE. I—think—it does n't.

JACK. (*Pause.*) Well, just this moment, it does n't, but—(*pause*)—is n't that—simply mental excitement—won't it come back?

PRENTICE. It won't come back to-day.

JACK. That's some comfort. The blamed things have made it busy for me since I've been studying this business.

PRENTICE. It is a two-edged sword—

JACK. You mean it's bad for a man who tries it?

PRENTICE. I mean that it constantly opens to the investigator new mental heights, higher planes—and every man, Mr. Brookfield, is ill in some manner who lives habitually on a lower level—than the light he sees.

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

SERVANT. Two ladies, sir.

PRENTICE. Your friends?

JACK. I think so.

(PRENTICE *and* JACK *look at* SERVANT.)

SERVANT. Yes, sir.

PRENTICE. Ask them up.

(*Exit* SERVANT.)

JACK. Thank you.

PRENTICE. (*Rises.*) I'll put away Judge Henderson's glass.

JACK. They're Kentucky ladies, Mr. Justice.

PRENTICE. (*Indicating* JACK.) But I don't want any credit for a hospitality I have n't earned.

JACK. I see.

(*Enter* SERVANT *with* HELEN *and* VIOLA.)

JACK. My niece, Miss Campbell.

PRENTICE. Miss Campbell.

JACK. And—

HELEN. One moment, Jack, I prefer to introduce myself.

PRENTICE. Won't you be seated, ladies?

(*Exit* SERVANT. HELEN *sits right of table.* VIOLA *goes to the window-seat.* JACK *stands center.*)

HELEN. You are not a married man, Justice Prentice?

PRENTICE. I am not.

HELEN. But you have the reputation of being a very charitable one.

PRENTICE. (*Sits left of table.*) That's pleasant to hear—what charity do you represent?

HELEN. None. I hardly know how to tell you my object.

PRENTICE. It's a personal matter, is it?

JACK. (*Back of table.*) Yes, a very personal matter.

PRENTICE. Ah!

HELEN. I have here an autograph book—

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) I usually sign my autograph for those who wish it—at the—

HELEN. I did not come for an autograph, Justice Prentice, I have brought one.

PRENTICE. Well, I don't go in for that kind of thing very much. I have no collection—my taste runs more toward—

HELEN. The autograph I have brought is one of yours, written many years ago. It is signed to a letter. Will you look at it?

(*Opens autograph book and gives small folded and old lace handkerchief from book to* VIOLA, *who joins her.*)

PRENTICE. With pleasure. (*Takes book.*) Is this the letter? Ah—(*Reads.*) "June 15, 1860." Dear me, that's a long time ago. (*Reads.*) "My dear Margaret: The matter passed satisfactorily—a mere scratch. Boland apologized.—Jim." What is this?

HELEN. A letter from you.

PRENTICE. And my dear Margaret—1860. Why, this letter—was it written to Margaret?

HELEN. To Margaret Price—

PRENTICE. Is it possible—well—well. (*Pause.*) I wonder if what we call coincidences are ever mere coincidences. Margaret Price. Her name was on my lips a moment ago.

JACK. Really, Mr. Justice?

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) Yes. Did you know Margaret Price?

JACK. Yes.

(*Looks at* HELEN—PRENTICE'S *gaze follows.*)

HELEN. She was my mother—

PRENTICE. Margaret Price was—

HELEN. Was my mother.

PRENTICE. Why, I was just speaking of her to Justice Henderson whom you saw go out. Her picture dropped from the table here. (*Gets it.*) This miniature! Margaret Price gave it to me herself. And you are her daughter?

HELEN. Yes, Justice Prentice.

PRENTICE. Yes, I can see the likeness. At twenty you must have looked very like this miniature.

(*Passes miniature to* HELEN.)

HELEN. (*As* JACK *and* VIOLA *look at miniature.*) I have photographs of myself that are very like this. (*To* PRENTICE.) And you were speaking of her just now?

PRENTICE. Not five minutes ago.—But be seated, please. (VIOLA *sits again at window.*) I'm very delighted to have you call.

HELEN. Even at such an hour?

PRENTICE. At any hour. Margaret Price was a very dear friend of mine; and to think, you're her daughter. And this letter 1860—what's this?

HELEN. Oh, don't touch that. It will break. It's only a dry spray of mignonette, pinned to the note when you sent it.

PRENTICE. (*Musingly.*) A spray of mignonette.

HELEN. My mother's favorite flower and perfume.

PRENTICE. I remember. Well, well, this is equally astonishing.

JACK. Do you remember the letter, Mr. Justice?

PRENTICE. Perfectly.

JACK. And the circumstances it alludes to?

PRENTICE. Yes. It was the work of a romantic boy. I—I was very fond of your mother, Mrs.— by the way, you haven't told me your name.

HELEN. Never mind that now. Let me be Margaret Price's daughter for the present.

PRENTICE. Very well. Oh, this was a little scratch of a duel—they've gone out of fashion now, I'm thankful to say.

HELEN. Do you remember the cause of this one?

PRENTICE. Yes; Henry Boland had worried Margaret some way. She was frightened, I think, and fainted.

HELEN. And you struck him?

PRENTICE. Yes, and he challenged me.

HELEN. I've heard mother tell it. Do you remember what frightened her?

PRENTICE. I don't believe I do. Does the letter say?

HELEN. No. Try to think.

PRENTICE. Was it a snake or a toad?

HELEN. No—a jewel.

PRENTICE. A jewel? I remember now—a—a—cat's-eye. A cat's-eye jewel, was n't it?

HELEN. (*With excitement.*) Yes, yes, yes. (*Weeping.*)

PRENTICE. My dear madam, it seems to be a very emotional subject with you.

HELEN. It is. I've so hoped you would remember it. On the cars I was praying all the way you would remember it. And you do—you do.

PRENTICE. I do.

VIOLA. (*Comes to* HELEN.) Compose yourself, dear. Remember what depends on it.

PRENTICE. It is evidently something in which I can aid you.

HELEN. It is—and you will?

PRENTICE. There is nothing I would not do for a daughter of Margaret Price. You are in mourning, dear lady; is it for your mother?

HELEN. For my son.

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) How long has he been dead?

HELEN. He is not dead. Justice Prentice, my boy—the grandson of Margaret Price—is under a sentence of death.

PRENTICE. Sentence of death?

HELEN. Yes. I am the mother of Clay Whipple.

PRENTICE. (*Rises.*) But, madam—

HELEN. He is to die. I come—

PRENTICE. (*Retreats toward second door.*) Stop! You forget yourself. The case of Whipple is before the Supreme Court of the United States. I am a member of that body—I cannot listen to you.

HELEN. You must.

PRENTICE. You are prejudicing his chances. (*To* JACK.) You are making it *necessary* for me to rule against him. (*To* HELEN.) My dear madam, for the sake of your boy, do not do this. It is unlawful—without dignity or precedent. (*To* JACK.) If the lady were not the mother of the boy I should call your conduct base—

VIOLA. But she is his mother.

HELEN. (*Following.*) And Justice Prentice, I am the daughter of the woman you loved.

PRENTICE. I beg you to be silent.

JACK. Won't you hear us a moment?

PRENTICE. I cannot. I dare not—I must leave you. (*Going.*)

VIOLA. Why?

PRENTICE. I have explained—the matter is before the court. For me to hear you would be corrupt.

HELEN. I won't talk of the question before your court. That, our attorneys tell us, is a constitutional point.

PRENTICE. That is its attitude.

HELEN. I will not talk of that. I wish to speak of this letter.

JACK. You can listen to that, can't you, Mr. Justice?

PRENTICE. Do you hope for its influence indirectly?

HELEN. No; sit down, Justice Prentice, and compose yourself. I will talk calmly to you.

PRENTICE. My dear madam, my heart bleeds for you. (*To* JACK.) Her agony must be past judicial measurement.

JACK. Only God knows, sir!

(HELEN *sits at table;* VIOLA *stands by her side;* PRENTICE *sits by the fire;* JACK *remains standing.*)

HELEN. (*Pause.*) Justice Prentice.

PRENTICE. Mrs. Whipple.

HELEN. You remember this letter—you have recalled the duel. You remember —thank God—its cause?

PRENTICE. I do.

HELEN. You know that my mother's aversion to that jewel amounted almost to an insanity?

PRENTICE. I remember that.

HELEN. I inherited that aversion. When a child, the sight of one of them would throw me almost into convulsions.

PRENTICE. Is it possible?

HELEN. It is true. The physicians said I would outgrow the susceptibility, and in a measure I did so. But I discovered that Clay had inherited the fatal dislike from me.

JACK. You can understand that, Mr. Justice?

PRENTICE. Medical jurisprudence is full of such cases. Why should we deny them? Is nature faithful only in physical matters? You are like this portrait. Your voice *is* that of Margaret Price. Nature's behest should have also embraced some of the less apparent possessions, I think.

JACK. We urged all that at the trial, but they called it invention.

PRENTICE. Nothing seems more probable to me.

HELEN. Clay, my boy, had that dreadful and unreasonable fear of the jewel. I protected him as far as possible, but one night over a year ago, some men—companions—finding that the sight of this stone annoyed him, pressed it upon his attention. He did not know, Justice Prentice, he was not responsible. It was insanity, but he struck his tormentor and the blow resulted in the young man's death.

PRENTICE. Terrible—terrible!

HELEN. My poor boy is crushed with the awful deed. He is not a murderer. He was never that, but they have sentenced him, Justice Prentice—he—is to die.

(*Rises impulsively.*)

JACK. (*Catching her.*) Now—now—my dear Helen, compose yourself.

VIOLA. (*Embracing her.*) You promised.

HELEN. Yes, yes, I will.

(VIOLA *leads* HELEN *aside.*)

PRENTICE. All this was ably presented to the trial court, you say?

JACK. By the best attorneys.

PRENTICE. And the verdict?

JACK. Still was guilty. But, Mr. Justice, the sentiment of the community has changed very much since then. We feel that a new trial would result differently.

HELEN. When our lawyers decided to go to the Supreme Court, I remembered some letters of yours in this old book. Can you imagine my joy when I found the letter was on the very point of this inherited trait on which we rested our defense?

JACK. We have ridden twenty-four hours to reach you. The train came in only at ten o'clock.

HELEN. You—you are not powerless to help me. What is an official duty to a mother's love? To the life of my boy?

PRENTICE. My dear, dear madam, that is not necessary—believe me. This letter comes very properly under the head of new evidence. (*To* JACK.) The defendant is entitled to a rehearing on that.

HELEN. Justice Prentice! Justice Prentice! (*Turns again to* VIOLA.)

VIOLA. There—there—

(*Comforts* HELEN.)

PRENTICE. Of course that is n't before us, but when we remand the case on this constitutional point—

HELEN. Then you will—you will remand it?

PRENTICE. (*Prevaricating.*) Justice Henderson had convinced me on the point as

you called. So I think there is no doubt of the decision.

HELEN. You can never know the light you let into my heart.

(VIOLA *returns the lace handkerchief to the book which* HELEN *opens for the purpose, closing it again on the handkerchief.*)

PRENTICE. What is that perfume? Have you one about you?

HELEN. Yes, on this handkerchief.

PRENTICE. What is it?

HELEN. Mignonette.

PRENTICE. Mignonette.

HELEN. A favorite perfume of mother's. This handkerchief of hers was in the book with the letter.

PRENTICE. Indeed.

HELEN. Oh, Justice Prentice, do you think I can save my boy?

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) On the rehearing I will take pleasure in testifying as to this hereditary aversion—and what I knew of its existence in Margaret Price.

JACK. May I tell the lawyers so?

PRENTICE. No. They will learn it in the court to-morrow. They can stand the suspense. I am speaking comfort to the mother's heart.

HELEN. Comfort. It is life!

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) Say nothing of this call, if you please. Nothing to any one.

JACK. We shall respect your instructions, Mr. Justice. My niece, who has been with Mrs. Whipple during this trouble, is the fiancée of the boy who is in jail.

PRENTICE. You have my sympathy, too, my dear.

VIOLA. Thank you.

(*Goes to* PRENTICE *and gives him her hand.*)

PRENTICE. And now good-night.

VIOLA. Good-night.

(*Goes to door where* JACK *joins her.*)

HELEN. Good-night, Justice Prentice. You must know my gratitude—words cannot tell it. (*Exit* VIOLA.)

PRENTICE. Would you do me a favor?

HELEN. Can you ask it?

(JACK *waits at the door.*)

PRENTICE. If that was the handkerchief of Margaret Price, I 'd like to have it.

(*With a moment's effort at self-control,* HELEN *gives* PRENTICE *the handkerchief. She does not dare to speak, but turns to* JACK *who leads her out.* PRENTICE *goes to the table and takes up the miniature. A distant bell tolls two.*)

PRENTICE. Margaret Price. People will say that she has been in her grave thirty years, but I 'll swear her spirit was in this room to-night and directed a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States.

(*Noticing the handkerchief which he holds he puts it to his lips.*)

"The delicate odor of mignonette,
The ghost of a dead-and-gone bouquet,
Is all that tells of her story; yet
Could she think of a sweeter way?"

ACT THIRD.

SCENE—*Same as Act First.* JACK *is sitting in the chair with his elbows on his knees, apparently in deep thought.*

(*Enter* HARVEY, *left.*)

HARVEY. Mars Jack.

JACK. Well, Uncle Harvey?

HARVEY. 'Scuse me, sah, when you wants to be alone, but I 'se awful anxious myself. Is dey any word from the courthouse?

JACK. None, Uncle Harvey.

HARVEY. 'Cause Jo said Missus Campbell done come in, an' I thought she 'd been to the trial, you know.

JACK. She has. You 're not keeping anything from me, Uncle Harvey?

HARVEY. 'Deed, no, sah. Ah jes' like to ask you, Mars Jack, if I 'd better have de cook fix sumpun' to eat—maybe de other ladies comin' too?

JACK. Yes, Uncle Harvey, but whether they 'll want to eat or not 'll depend on what word comes back with the jury.

HARVEY. Yes, sah. (*Exit left.*)

(*Enter* ALICE, *right center.*)

ALICE. (*In astonishment and reproach.*) Jack—

JACK. Well—

ALICE. Why are you here?

JACK. Well—I live here.

ALICE. But I thought you 'd gone to Helen and Viola.

JACK. No.

ALICE. You should do so, Jack. Think of them alone when that jury returns—as it may at any moment—with its verdict.

JACK. The lawyers are there and Lew Ellinger is with them.
ALICE. But Helen—Helen needs you.
JACK. I may be useful here.
ALICE. How?
JACK. There 's one man on that jury that I think is a friend.
ALICE. One man?
JACK. Yes.
ALICE. Out of a jury of twelve.
JACK. One man can stop the other eleven from bringing in an adverse verdict—and this one is with us.
ALICE. Would your going to Helen and Viola in the court-house stop his being with us?
JACK. Perhaps not, but it would stop my being with him.
ALICE. What? (*Looks about.*) I don't understand you.
JACK. Justice Prentice told me that he could sit alone in his room and make another man get up and walk to the telephone and call him by simply thinking steadily of that other man.
ALICE. Superstitious people imagine anything.
JACK. Imagine much—yes—but this is n't imagination.
ALICE. It 's worse—Jack. I call it spiritualism.
JACK. Call it anything you like—spiritualism—or socialism—or rheumatism—it 's there. I know nothing about it scientifically, but I 've tried it on and it works, my dear Alice, it works.
ALICE. You 've tried it on?
JACK. Yes.
ALICE. With whom?
JACK. With you.
ALICE. I don't know it if you have.
JACK. That is one phase of its terrible subtlety.
ALICE. When did you try it on?
JACK. (*Inquiringly.*) That night, a month ago, when you rapped at my door at two o'clock in the morning and asked if I was ill in any way?
ALICE. I was simply nervous about you.
JACK. Call it "nervousness" if you wish to—but that was an experiment of mine—a simple experiment.
ALICE. Oh!
JACK. Two Sundays ago you went right up to the church door—hesitated, and turned home again.
ALICE. Lots of people do that.
JACK. I don't ask you to take stock in it, but that was another experiment of mine. The thing appeals to me. I can't help Helen by being at the court-house, but, as I 'm alive and my name 's Jack Brookfield, I do believe that my thought reaches that particular juryman.
ALICE. That 's lunacy, Jack, dear.
JACK. (*Rises and walks.*) Well, call it "lunacy." I don't insist on "rheumatism."
ALICE. Oh, Jack, the boy's life is in the balance. Bitter vindictive lawyers are prosecuting him, and I don't like my big strong brother, who used to meet men and all danger face to face, treating the situation with silly mind-cure methods—hidden alone in his rooms. I don't like it.
JACK. You can't acquit a boy of murder by having a strong brother thrash somebody in the court-rooms. If there was anything under the sun I could do with my physical strength, I 'd do it; but there is n't. Now, why not try this? Why not, if I believe I can influence a juryman by my thought,—why not try?
(ALICE *turns away.*)

(*Enter* JO, *right center.*)

JACK. Well?
JO. Mistah Hardmuth.
ALICE. (*Astonished.*) Frank Hardmuth?
JO. Yes.
JACK. Here 's one of the "bitter vindictive" men you want me to meet face to face. You stay here while I go and do it. (*Starts up.*)

(*Enter* HARDMUTH.)

HARDMUTH. Excuse me, but I can't wait in an anteroom.
JACK. That 'll do, Jo. (*Exit* JO.)
HARDMUTH. I want to see you alone.
JACK. (*To* ALICE.) Yes—
ALICE. (*Going.*) What do you think it is?
JACK. Nothing to worry over.
(*Conducts her to door. Exit* ALICE.)
HARDMUTH. (*Threateningly.*) Jack Brookfield.
JACK. Well? (*Confronts* HARDMUTH.)
HARDMUTH. I 've just seen Harvey Fisher—of the *Courier.*
JACK. Yes.
HARDMUTH. He says you 've hinted at something associating me with the shooting of Scovill.
JACK. Right.
HARDMUTH. What do you mean?
JACK. I mean, Frank Hardmuth, that you

shan't hound this boy to the gallows without reckoning with me and the things I know of you.

HARDMUTH. I 'm doing my duty as a prosecuting attorney.

JACK. You are, and a great deal more—you 're venting a personal hatred.

HARDMUTH. That has n't anything to do with this insinuation you 've handed to a newspaper man, an insinuation for which anybody ought to kill you.

JACK. I don't deal in "insinuations." It was a charge.

HARDMUTH. A statement?

JACK. A charge! You understand English—a specific and categorical charge.

HARDMUTH. That I knew Scovill was to be shot.

JACK. That you knew it? No. That you planned it and arranged and *procured* his assassination.

HARDMUTH. (*In low tone.*) If the newspapers print that, I 'll kill you—damn you, I 'll kill you.

JACK. I don't doubt your willingness. And they 'll print it—if they have n't done so already—and if they don't print it, by God, I 'll print it myself and *paste it on the fences.*

HARDMUTH. (*Weakening.*) What have I ever done to you, Jack Brookfield, except to be your friend?

JACK. You 've been much too friendly. With this murder on your conscience, you proposed to take to yourself, as wife, my niece, dear to me as my life. As revenge for her refusal and mine, you 've persecuted through two trials the boy she loved, and the son of the woman whose thought regulates the pulse of my heart, an innocent, unfortunate boy. In your ambition you 've reached out to be the governor of this State, and an honored political party is seriously considering you for that office to-day.

HARDMUTH. That Scovill story 's a lie—a political lie. I think you mean to be honest, Jack Brookfield, but somebody 's strung you.

JACK. Wait! The man that 's now hiding in Indiana—a fugitive from your feeble efforts at extradition—sat upstairs drunk and desperate—his last dollar on a case card. I pitied him. If a priest had been there he could n't have purged his soul cleaner than poor Raynor gave it to me. If *he* put me on, am I strung?

HARDMUTH. (*Frightened.*) Yes, you are. I can't tell you why, because this jury is out and may come in any moment and I 've got to be there, but I can square it. So help me God, I can square it.

JACK. You 'll have to square it.

(*Enter* ALICE, *from the left, followed by* PRENTICE. *The Justice carries a folded newspaper.*)

ALICE. Jack. (*Indicates* PRENTICE.)

PRENTICE. Excuse me, I—

HARDMUTH. Oh—Justice Prentice.

JACK. Mr. Hardmuth—the State's attorney.

PRENTICE. I recognize Mr. Hardmuth. I did n't salute him because I resent his disrespectful treatment of myself during his cross-examination.

HARDMUTH. Entirely within my rights as a lawyer and—

PRENTICE. Entirely—and never within the opportunities of a gentleman.

HARDMUTH. Your side foresaw the powerful effect on a local jury of any testimony by a member of the Supreme Court, and my wish to break that—

PRENTICE. Was quite apparent, sir,—quite apparent,—but the testimony of every man is entitled to just such weight and consideration as that man's character commands. But it is not that disrespect which I resent. I am an old man—That I am unmarried—childless—without a son to inherit the vigor that time has reclaimed, is due to—a sentiment that you endeavored to ridicule, Mr. Hardmuth, a sentiment which would have been sacred in the hands of any true Kentuckian, which I am glad to hear you are not.

JACK. That 's all.

HARDMUTH. Perhaps not. (*Exit.*)

PRENTICE. My dear Mr. Brookfield, that man certainly has n't seen this newspaper?

JACK. No—but he knows it 's coming.

PRENTICE. When I urged you as a citizen to tell anything you knew of the man, I had n't expected a capital charge.

ALICE. What is it, Jack,—what have you said?

JACK. (*To* ALICE.) All in the headlines—read it. (*Gives* ALICE *the paper. To* PRENTICE.) That enough for your purpose, Justice Prentice?

PRENTICE. I never dreamed of an attack of that—that magnitude— Enough!

ALICE. Why—why did you do this, Jack?

JACK. Because I 'm your big strong brother—and I had the information.

PRENTICE. It was necessary, Mrs. Campbell,—necessary.

ALICE. Why necessary?

JACK. My poor sister, you don't think. If that jury brings in a verdict of guilty —what then?

ALICE. What then? I don't know.

JACK. An appeal to the governor—for clemency.

ALICE. Well?

JACK. Then we delay things until a new governor comes in. But suppose that new governor is Hardmuth himself.

ALICE. How can the new governor be Hardmuth?

PRENTICE. Nothing can stop it if he gets the nomination, and the convention is in session at Frankfort to-day with Mr. Hardmuth's name in the lead.

JACK. (*Indicating paper.*) I've served that notice on them and they won't dare nominate him. That is, I think they won't.

ALICE. But to charge him with murder?

PRENTICE. The only thing to consider there is,—have you your facts?

JACK. I have.

PRENTICE. Then it was a duty and you chose the psychological moment for its performance. "With what measure you mete—it shall be measured to you again." I have pity for the man whom that paper crushes, but I have greater pity for the boy he is trying to have hanged. (*Goes to* ALICE.) You know, Mrs. Campbell, that young Whipple is the grandson of an old friend of mine.

ALICE. Yes, Justice Prentice, I know that.

(*Enter* JO, *followed by* HELEN *and* VIOLA.)

JO. Mars Jack!

JACK. (*Turning.*) Yes?

HELEN. Oh, Jack!—

(*Comes down to* JACK. VIOLA *goes to* ALICE.)

JACK. What is it?

(*Catches and supports* HELEN.)

VIOLA. The jury returned and asked for instructions.

JACK. Well?

HELEN. There's a recess of an hour.

VIOLA. The court wishes them locked up for the night, but the foreman said the jurymen were all anxious to get to their homes and he felt an agreement could be reached in an hour.

PRENTICE. Did he use exactly those words —"to their homes"?

VIOLA. "To their homes"—yes.

PRENTICE. (*Smiling at* JACK.) There you are.

HELEN. What, Jack?

JACK. What?

PRENTICE. Men with vengeance or severity in their hearts would hardly say they're "anxious to get to their homes." They say, "the jury is anxious to get away," or "to finish its work."

HELEN. Oh, Justice Prentice, you pin hope upon such slight things.

PRENTICE. That is what hope is for, my dear Mrs. Whipple; the frail chances of this life.

VIOLA. And now, Uncle Jack, Mrs. Whipple ought to have a cup of tea and something to eat.

HELEN. Oh, I could n't—we must go back at once.

VIOLA. Well, I could—I—I must.

ALICE. Yes—you must—both of you.

(*Exit to dining-room.*)

VIOLA. (*Returning to* HELEN.) You don't think it's heartless, do you?

HELEN. You dear child. (*Kisses her.*)

VIOLA. You come, too.

HELEN. (*Refusing.*) Please.

(*Exit* VIOLA. HELEN *sinks to sofa.*)

JACK. And now, courage, my dear HELEN; it's almost over.

HELEN. At the other trial the jury delayed—just this way.

PRENTICE. Upon what point did the jury ask instruction?

HELEN. Degree.

PRENTICE. And the court?

HELEN. Oh, Jack, the Judge answered—guilty in the first degree, or not guilty.

PRENTICE. That all helps us.

HELEN. It does?

JACK. Who spoke for the jury?

HELEN. The foreman—and one other juryman asked a question.

JACK. Was it the man in the fourth chair —first row?

HELEN. (*Inquiringly.*) Yes—?

JACK. Ah.

HELEN. Why?

JACK. I think he's a friend, that's all.

HELEN. I should die, Jack, if it was n't for your courage. You won't get tired of it—will you—and forsake my poor boy—and me?

JACK. (*Encouragingly.*) What do you think?

HELEN. All our lawyers are kindness itself, but—but—you—Jack—you somehow—

(*Enter* VIOLA.)

VIOLA. Oh, Uncle Jack—here 's a note our lawyer asked me to give to you—I forgot it until this minute.

JACK. Thank you. (*Takes note.*)

VIOLA. Please try a cup of tea.

HELEN. No—no—Viola. (*Exit* VIOLA.) What is it, Jack? Are they afraid?

JACK. It 's not about the trial at all. (*Hands note to* PRENTICE.)

HELEN. Really?

JACK. Yes.

HELEN. But why don't you show it to us, then?

JACK. (PRENTICE *returns note.*) I will—if my keeping it gives you so much alarm as that. (*Turns on the large drop light and stands under it.*) Colonel Bayley says—"Dear Jack, I 've seen the paper; Hardmuth will shoot on sight."

HELEN. (*Quickly to* JACK'S *side.*) Oh, Jack, if anything should happen to you—

JACK. "Anything" is quite as likely to happen to Mr. Hardmuth.

HELEN. But not even that—my boy has killed a man—and—you—Jack—you—well, you just must n't let it happen, that 's all.

JACK. I must n't let it happen because—?

HELEN. Because—I—could n't bear it. (JACK *lifts her hand to his face and kisses it.*)

(*Enter* ALICE.)

ALICE. What was the letter, Jack?

JACK. (*Hands letter to* ALICE *as he passes, leading* HELEN *to door.*) And, now I 'll agree to do the best I can for Mr. Hardmuth if you 'll take a cup of tea and a biscuit.

HELEN. There is n't time.

JACK. There 's plenty of time if the adjournment was for an hour.

ALICE. (*In alarm.*) Jack!

JACK. Eh—(*Turns to* ALICE.) Wait one minute. (*Goes on to door with* HELEN.) Go. (*Exit* HELEN.)

ALICE. (*As* JACK *returns.*) He threatens your life.

JACK. Not exactly. Simply Colonel Bayley's opinion that he will shoot on sight.

ALICE. (*Impatiently.*) Oh—

JACK. There is a difference, you know.

(*Enter* JO.)

JO. Mr. Ellinger, sah.

(*Enter* LEW.)

LEW. (*Briskly.*) Hello, Jack.

(*Exit* JO.)

JACK. Well, Lew?

LEW. (*With newspaper.*) Why, that 's the damnedest thing—(*To* ALICE.) I beg your pardon.

ALICE. Don't, please,—some manly emphasis is a real comfort, Mr. Ellinger.

LEW. That charge of yours against Hardmuth is raisin' more h-h-high feeling than anything that ever happened.

JACK. I saw the paper.

LEW. You did n't see this—it 's an extra. (*Reads.*) "The charge read to the convention in night session at Frankfort—Bill Glover hits Jim Macey on the nose—De Voe of Carter County takes Jim's gun away from him. The delegation from Butler get down to their stomachs and crawl under the benches—some statesmen go through the windows. Convention takes a recess till morning. Local sheriff swearin' in deputies to keep peace in the barrooms." That 's all you 've done.

JACK. (*To* ALICE.) Good! (*To* PRENTICE.) Well, they can't nominate Mr. Hardmuth now.

LEW. (*To* ALICE.) I been hedgin'—I told the fellows I 'd bet Jack had n't said it.

JACK. Yes—I did say it.

LEW. In just those words—? (*Reads.*) "The poor fellow that crouched back of a window sill and shot Kentucky's governor deserves hanging less than the man whom he is shielding—the man who laid the plot of assassination, the present prosecuting attorney by appointment—Frank Allison Hardmuth." Did you say that?

JACK. Lew, that there might be no mistake—I wrote it. (LEW *whistles;* JACK *takes the paper and scans it.*)

LEW. Is it straight?

JACK. Yes. (*Pushes hanging button and turns off the large drop-light.*)

LEW. He *was* in the plot to kill the governor?

JACK. He organized it.

LEW. Well, what do you think of that? And now he 's runnin' for governor himself—a murderer?

JACK. Yes.

LEW. (*To* PRENTICE.) And for six months he 's been houndin' every fellow in Louisville that sat down to a game of cards. (JACK *nods.*) The damned rascal 's nearly put me in the poorhouse.

JACK. Poor old Lew!

LEW. (*To* PRENTICE.) Why, before I could get to that court-house to-day I had to take a pair of scissors that I used to cut coupons with and trim the whiskers off o' my shirt cuffs. (*To* JACK.) How long have you known this?

JACK. Ever since the fact.

PRENTICE. Mm—

LEW. Why do you spring it only now?

JACK. Because until now I lacked the character and the moral courage. I spring it now by the advice of Justice Prentice to reach that convention at Frankfort.

LEW. Well, you reached them.

PRENTICE. The convention was only a secondary consideration with me—my real object was this jury with whom Mr. Hardmuth seemed too powerful.

LEW. Reach the jury?

JACK. (*Enthusiastically.*) The jury? Why, of course,—the entire jury,—and I was hoping for one man—

LEW. Why, they don't see the papers—the jury won't get a line of this.

JACK. I think they will.

LEW. You got 'em fixed?

JACK. (*Indignantly.*) *Fixed?* No.

LEW. Then how will they see it?

PRENTICE. (*Firmly and slowly to* LEW, *who is half dazed.*) How many people in Louisville have already read that charge as you have read it?

LEW. Thirty thousand, maybe, but—

PRENTICE. And five hundred thousand in the little cities and the towns. Do you think, Mr. Ellinger, that all those minds can be at white heat over that knowledge and none of it reach the thought of those twelve men? Ah, no—

JACK. To half a million good Kentuckians to-night Frank Hardmuth is a repulsive thing—and that jury's faith in him—is dead.

LEW. (*Pause.*) Why, Jack, old man, you're dippy.

(ALICE *turns away wearily, agreeing with* LEW.)

PRENTICE. Then, Mr. Ellinger, I am dippy, too. (ALICE *turns back.*)

LEW. You mean you think the jury gets the public opinion—without anybody tellin' them or their reading it.

PRENTICE. Yes. (*Pause.* LEW *looks stunned.*) In every widely discussed trial the defendant is tried not alone by his twelve peers, but by the entire community.

LEW. Why, blast it! The community goes by what the newspaper says!

PRENTICE. That is often the regrettable part of it—but the fact remains.

JACK. And that's why you asked me to expose Frank Hardmuth?

PRENTICE. Yes.

LEW. Well, the public will think you did it because he closed your game.

JACK. Hardmuth did n't close my game.

LEW. Who did?

JACK. (*Pointing to* PRENTICE.) This man.

PRENTICE. (*To* JACK.) Thank you.

LEW. How the he—er—heaven's name did he close it?

JACK. He gave my self-respect a slap on the back and I stood up. (*Exit.*)

LEW. (*Thoroughly confused. Pause.*) Stung! (*Turns to* PRENTICE.) So you are responsible for these—these new ideas of Jack's?

PRENTICE. In a measure. Have the ideas apparently hurt Mr. Brookfield?

LEW. They've put him out of business—that's all.

PRENTICE. Which business?

LEW. Why, this house of his.

PRENTICE. I see. But his new ideas? Don't you like them, Mr. Ellinger?

LEW. I love Jack Brookfield—love him like a brother—but I don't want even a brother askin' me if I'm sure I've "thought it over" when I'm startin' to take the halter off for a pleasant evenin'. Get my idea?

PRENTICE. I begin to.

LEW. In other words—I don't want to take my remorse first. It dampens fun. The other day a lady at the races said, "We've missed you, Mr. Ellinger." And I said, "Have you?—Well I'll be up this evening," and I'm pressing her hand and hanging on to it till I'm afraid I'll get the carriage grease on my coat—feelin' only about thirty-two, you know, then I turn round and Jack has those sleepy lamps on me—and "bla"—

(*Turns and sinks on to sofa.*)

PRENTICE. And you don't go?

LEW. (*Bracing up.*) I *do* go—as a matter of self-respect—but I don't make a hit. I'm thinking so much more about those morality ideas of Jack's than I am about the lady that it cramps my style and we never get past the weather, and "when did you last hear from So-and-so?" (*Rises.*) I want to reform all right. I believe in reform. But first I

want to have the fun of fallin' and fallin' hard.

JO. (*Distant and outside.*) 'Fore God, Mars Clay!

CLAY. Jo, is my mother here?

ALICE. (*Entering left.*) Why, that's Clay.

(*Voices off continue together and approach.*)

LEW. (*To* PRENTICE.) It's the boy.

ALICE. His mother! (*Starts to call* HELEN, *then falters in indecision.*) Oh!

(*The outside voices grow louder.*)

PRENTICE. Acquittal!

(*Enter* CLAY, *followed by* COLONEL BAYLEY, *his attorney.*)

ALICE. Clay, Clay!

CLAY. Oh, Mrs. Campbell.

(ALICE *embraces him.*)

(*Enter* JACK, HELEN, *and* VIOLA.)

JACK. (*Seeing* CLAY *and speaking back to* HELEN.) Yes.

HELEN. (*As she enters.*) My boy!

CLAY. Mother!

(*They embrace.* CLAY *slips to his knee with his face hidden in* HELEN'S *lap, repeating her name.* HELEN *standing sways and is caught by* JACK. CLAY *noting this weakness rises and helps support her.*)

JACK. (*Rousing her.*) He's free, Helen, he's free.

CLAY. Yes, mother, I'm free.

(VIOLA, *who has crossed back of* CLAY *and* HELEN, *weeps on shoulder of* ALICE, *who comforts her.*)

HELEN. My boy, my boy!

(VIOLA *looks at them.* HELEN *sees* VIOLA *and turns* CLAY *toward her.* CLAY *takes* VIOLA *in his arms.*)

CLAY. Viola, my brave sweetheart!

VIOLA. It's really over?

CLAY. Yes.

JACK. It's a great victory, Colonel.

BAYLEY. Thank you.

JACK. If ever a lawyer made a good fight for a man's life, you did. Helen, Viola, you must want to shake this man's hand.

VIOLA. I could have thrown my arms around you when you made that speech.

BAYLEY. (*Laughing.*) Too many young fellows crowding into the profession as it is.

HELEN. (*Taking his hand.*) Life must be sweet to a man who can do so much good as you do.

BAYLEY. I could n't stand it, you know, if it was n't that my ability works both ways.

(*Enter* HARVEY, *left.*)

HARVEY. Mars Clay.

CLAY. Harvey! Why, dear old Harvey.

(*Half embraces* HARVEY *and pats him affectionately.*)

HARVEY. Yes, sah. Could—could you eat anything, Mars Clay?

CLAY. Eat anything! Why, I'm starvin', Harvey.

HARVEY. Ha, ha. Yes, sah.

(*Exit quickly.*)

CLAY. But *you* with me, mother—and *Viola.*

HELEN. My boy! Colonel!

(*Turns to* BAYLEY. *Exeunt* CLAY, VIOLA, HELEN, BAYLEY, *and* ALICE *to dining-room.*)

JACK. (*Alone with* PRENTICE. *Picks up* BAYLEY'S *letter; takes hold of push button over head.*) I shall never doubt you again.

PRENTICE. Mr. Brookfield, never doubt yourself.

(*Enter* HARDMUTH. *He rushes down toward toward dining-room and turns back to* JACK *who is under the lamp with his hand on its button.*)

HARDMUTH. You think you'll send me to the gallows, but, damn you, you go first yourself.

(*Thrusts a derringer against* JACK'S *body.*)

JACK. Stop! (*The big light flashes on above* HARDMUTH'S *eyes. At* JACK'S *"Stop,"* PRENTICE *inclines forward with eyes on* HARDMUTH *so that there is a double battery of hypnotism on him. A pause.*) You can't shoot—that—gun. You can't pull the trigger. (*Pause.*) You can't even hold the gun. (*Pauses. The derringer drops from* HARDMUTH'S *hand.*) Now, Frank, you can go.

HARDMUTH. (*Recoiling slowly.*) I'd like to know—how in hell you did that—to me.

ACT FOURTH.

The scene is the same as in Act Third. All the lights are on, including the large electric light. CLAY *and* VIOLA *seated on sofa near the fire-place.*

VIOLA. I must really say good-night and let you get some sleep.

CLAY. Not before Jack gets home. Our mothers have considerately left us alone together. They 'll just as considerately tell us when it 's time to part.

VIOLA. *My* mother said it was time half an hour ago.

CLAY. Wait till Jack comes in.

(*Enter* JO.)

JO. Mars Clay?

CLAY. Well, Jo?

JO. Dey 's another reporter to see you, sah?

VIOLA. Send him away—Mr. Whipple won't see any more reporters.

CLAY. (*Rises.*) Wait a minute—who is he? (JO *hands card.*) I 've got to see this one, Viola.

VIOLA. (*Complaining.*) Why "got to"?

CLAY. He 's a friend—I 'll see him, Jo.

JO. Yas, sah— (*Exit.*)

VIOLA. (*Rises.*) You 've said that all day —they 're all friends.

CLAY. Well, they are—but this boy especially. It was fine to see you and mother and Jack when I was in that jail —great—but you were there daytimes. This boy spent hours on the other side of the bars helping me pass the awful nights. I tell you—death-cells would be pretty nearly hell if it was n't for the police reporters—ministers ain't in it with 'em.

(*Enter* EMMETT, *a reporter.*)

EMMETT. Good-evening.

CLAY. How are you, Ned? You know Miss Campbell?

EMMETT. (*Bowing.*) Yes.

VIOLA. Good-evening.

CLAY. Have a chair.

EMMETT. Thank you. (*Defers to* VIOLA *who sits first on sofa. Pause.*) This is different.

(*Looks around the room.*)

CLAY. Some.

EMMETT. Satisfied? The way we handled the story?

CLAY. Perfectly. You were just bully, old man.

EMMETT. (*To* VIOLA.) That artist of ours is only a kid—and they work him to death on the "Sunday"—so—(*Pause. To* CLAY.) You understand.

CLAY. Oh—I got used to the—pictures a year ago.

EMMETT. Certainly. (*Pause.*) Anything you want to say?

VIOLA. For the paper?

EMMETT. Yes.

CLAY. I think not.

(*Enter* HELEN *and* ALICE. EMMETT *rises.*)

HELEN. Clay, dear—(*Pause.*) Oh—

CLAY. You met my mother?

EMMETT. No—

CLAY. Mother—this is Mr. Emmett of whom I 've told you so often.

HELEN. Oh—the good reporter.

EMMETT. (*To* CLAY.) Gee! That 'd be a wonder if the gang heard it. (*Taking* HELEN'S *hand as she offers it.*) We got pretty well acquainted—yes, 'm.

CLAY. (*Introducing* ALICE.) Mrs. Campbell.

ALICE. Won't you sit down, Mr. Emmett?

EMMETT. Thank you. I guess we 've covered everything, but the chief wanted me to see your son—(*turns to* CLAY) and see if you 'd do the paper a favor?

CLAY. If possible—gladly—

EMMETT. I don't like the assignment because—well for the very reason that it was handed to me—and that is because we 're more or less friendly.

(*Enter* JACK *in fur coat with cap and goggles in hand.*)

JACK. Well, it 's a wonderful night outside.

ALICE. You 're back early.

JACK. Purposely. (*To* EMMETT.) How are you?

EMMETT. (*Rising.*) Mr. Brookfield.

JACK. I thought you girls might like a little run in the moonlight before I put in the machine.

HELEN. Mr. Emmett has some message from his editor.

JACK. What is it?

EMMETT. There 's a warrant out for Hardmuth—you saw that?

VIOLA. Yes, we saw that.

(*Goes to* JACK.)

JACK. To-night's paper—

EMMETT. If they get him and he comes to trial and all that, it 'll be the biggest trial Kentucky ever saw.

CLAY. Well?

EMMETT. Well—the paper wants you to agree to report it for them—the trial—there 'll be other papers after you, of course.

VIOLA. Oh, no—

EMMETT. Understand, Clay, I'm not asking it. (*To* VIOLA.) I'm here under orders just as I'd be at a fire or a bread riot.

CLAY. (*Demurring.*) And—of course—you understand, don't you?

EMMETT. Perfectly—and I told the chief myself you would n't see it.

CLAY. Paper's been too friendly for me to assume any—any—

JACK. Unnecessary dignity—

CLAY. Exactly—but—I just could n't, you see—

EMMETT. (*Going.*) Oh, leave it to me—I'll let 'em down easy.

CLAY. Thank you.

EMMETT. You expect to be in Europe or—

CLAY. But I don't.

(JACK *removes fur coat, puts it on chair up right center.*)

VIOLA. We're going to stay right here in Louisville—

CLAY. And work out my—my own future among the people who know me.

EMMETT. Of course—Europe's just to stall off the chief—get him on to some other dope—

HELEN. (*Rising.*) But—

JACK. (*Interrupting.*) It's all right.

HELEN. (*To* JACK.) I hate to begin with a falsehood.

EMMETT. Not your son—me—. Saw some copy on our telegraph desk, Mr. Brookfield, that'd interest you.

JACK. Yes.

EMMETT. Or maybe you know of it? Frankfort—

JACK. No.

EMMETT. Some friend named you in the caucus.

JACK. What connection?

EMMETT. Governor.

VIOLA. (*To* EMMETT.) Uncle Jack?

EMMETT. Yes, 'm—that is, for the nomination.

JACK. It's a joke.

EMMETT. Grows out of these Hardmuth charges, of course.

JACK. That's all.

EMMETT. Good-night—(*Bows.*) Mrs. Whipple—ladies— (*Exit.*)

CLAY. (*Going to door with* EMMETT.) You'll make that quite clear, won't you?

EMMETT. (*Outside.*) I'll fix it.

CLAY. (*Returning.*) If it was n't for the notoriety of it, I'd like to do that.

(*Sits right of table.*)

HELEN. (*Reproachfully.*) My son!

JACK. Why would you like to do it?

CLAY. To get even. I'd like to see Hardmuth suffer as he made me suffer. I'd like to *watch* him suffer and write of it.

JACK. That's a bad spirit to face the world with, my boy.

CLAY. I hate him. (*Goes to* VIOLA.)

JACK. Hatred is heavier freight for the shipper than it is for the consignee.

CLAY. I can't help it.

JACK. Yes, you can help it. Mr. Hardmuth should be of the utmost indifference to you. To hate him is weak.

VIOLA. Weak?

JACK. Yes, weak-minded. Hardmuth was in love with you at one time—he hated Clay. He said Clay was as weak as dishwater—(*to* CLAY)—and you were at that time. You've had your lesson—profit by it. Its meaning was self-control. Begin now if you're going to be the custodian of this girl's happiness.

HELEN. I'm sure he means to, Jack.

JACK. You can carry your hatred of Hardmuth and let it embitter your whole life—or you can drop it—so—(*Drops a book on table.*) The power that any man or anything has to annoy us we give him or it by our interest. Some idiot told your great-grandmother that a jewel with different colored strata in it was "bad luck"—or a "hoodoo"—she believed it, and she nursed her faith that passed the lunacy on to your grandmother.

HELEN. Jack, don't talk of that, please.

JACK. I'll skip one generation—but I'd like to talk of it.

ALICE. (*Rising, comes to* HELEN.) Why talk of it?

JACK. It was only a notion, and an effort of will can banish it.

CLAY. It was more than a notion.

JACK. Tom Denning's scarf-pin which he dropped there (*indicates floor*) was an exhibit in your trial—Judge Bayle returned it to me to-day.

(*Puts hand in pocket.*)

VIOLA. I wish you would n't, Uncle Jack.

(*Turns away.*)

JACK. (*To* CLAY.) You don't mind, do you?

CLAY. I'd rather not look at it—to-night.

JACK. You need n't look at it. I'll hold it in my hand and you put your hand over mine.

ALICE. I really don't see the use in this experiment, Jack.

JACK. (*With* CLAY'S *hand over his.*) That does n't annoy you, does it?

CLAY. I'm controlling myself, sir—but I feel the influence of the thing all through and through me.

HELEN. Jack!

(VIOLA *turns away in protest.*)

JACK. Down your back, is n't it, and in the roots of your hair—tingling—?

CLAY. Yes.

HELEN. Why torture him?

JACK. Is it torture?

CLAY. (*With brave self-control.*) I shall be glad when it 's over.

JACK. (*Severely.*) What rot! That 's only my night-key—look at it. I have n't the scarf-pin about me.

CLAY. Why make me think it was the scarf-pin?

JACK. To prove to you that it 's only thinking—that 's all. Now, be a man—the cat's-eye itself is in that table drawer. Get it and show Viola that you 're not a neuropathic idiot. You 're a child of *the everlasting God* and nothing on the earth or under it can harm you in the slightest degree. (CLAY *opens drawer and takes pin.*) That 's the spirit—look at it—I 've made many a young horse do that to an umbrella. Now, give it to me. (*To* VIOLA.) You 're not afraid of it?

VIOLA. Why, of course I 'm not.

JACK. (*Putting pin on her breast.*) Now, if you want my niece, go up to that hoodoo like a man.

(CLAY *embraces* VIOLA.)

HELEN. Oh, Jack, do you think that will last?

JACK. Which—indifference to the hoodoo or partiality to my niece?

CLAY. They 'll both last.

JACK. Now, my boy, drop your hatred of Hardmuth as you drop your fear of the scarf-pin. Don't look back—your life 's ahead of you. Don't mount for the race over-weight.

(*Enter* JO.)

JO. Mr. Ellinger.

(*Enter* LEW.)

LEW. I don't intrude, do I?

JACK. Come in.

LEW. (*To* LADIES.) Good-evening, Ah, Clay. (*Shakes hands with* CLAY.) Glad to see you looking so well. Glad to see you in such good company. (*To* JACK, *briskly.*) I 've got him.

JACK. Got whom?

LEW. Hardmuth. (*To* LADIES.) Detectives been hunting him all day, you know.

HELEN. He 's caught, you say?

LEW. No—but I 've treed him—(*to* JACK)—and I thought I 'd just have a word with you before passing the tip. (*To* LADIES.) He 's nearly put me in the poorhouse with his raids and closing laws, and I see a chance to get even.

JACK. In what way?

LEW. They 've been after him nearly twenty-four hours—morning paper 's going to offer a reward for him, and I understand the State will also. If I had a little help I 'd hide him for a day or two and then surrender him for those rewards.

JACK. Where is Hardmuth?

(*Sits at table.*)

LEW. Hiding.

JACK. (*Writing a note.*) Naturally.

LEW. You remember Big George?

JACK. The darkey?

LEW. Yes—used to be on the door at Phil Kelly's?

JACK. Yes.

LEW. He 's there. In Big George's cottage—long story—Big George's wife—that is, she—well, his wife used to be pantry maid for Hardmuth's mother. When they raided Kelly's game, Big George pretended to turn State's evidence, but he really hates Hardmuth like a rattler—so it all comes back to me. You see, if I 'd win a couple of hundred at Kelly's I used to slip George a ten going out. Your luck always stays by you if you divide a little with a nigger or a humpback—and in Louisville it 's easier to find a nigger—so—

JACK. He 's there now?

LEW. Yes. He wants to get away. He 's got two guns and he 'll shoot before he gives up—so I 'd have to con him some way. George's wife is to open the door to Kelly's old signal, you remember—(*raps*)—one knock, then two, and then one.

JACK. Where is the cottage?

LEW. Number 7 Jackson Street—little dooryard—border of arbor-vitæ on the path.

JACK. One knock—then two—and then one— (*Rises with note written.*)

LEW. What you gonta do?

JACK. Send for him.

LEW. Who you gonta send?

JACK. That boy there.

CLAY. Me?

JACK. Yes.

HELEN. Oh, no—no.

JACK. And my niece.
VIOLA. What! To arrest a man?
JACK. (*To* CLAY.) My machine is at the door. Give Hardmuth this note. He 'll come with you quietly. Bring him here. We 'll decide what to do with him after that.
ALICE. I can't allow Viola on such an errand.
JACK. When the man she 's promised to marry is going into danger—
VIOLA. If Mr. Hardmuth will come for that note—why can't I deliver it?
JACK. You may—if Clay 'll let you.
CLAY. (*Quietly taking note as* JACK *offers it to* VIOLA.) I 'll hand it to him.
JACK. I hope so. (*Gives goggles and coat.*) Take these—remember—one rap, then two, then one.
CLAY. I understand—number seven—?
LEW. Jackson Street.
ALICE. I protest.
HELEN. So do I.
JACK. (*To* CLAY *and* VIOLA.) You 're both of age. I ask you to do it. If you give Hardmuth the goggles, nobody 'll recognize him and with a lady beside him you 'll get him safely here.
CLAY. Come. (*Exit with* VIOLA.)
LEW. (*Following to door.*) I ought to be in the party.
JACK. No—you stay here.
ALICE. That 's scandalous.
JACK. But none of us will start the scandal, will we?
HELEN. Clay knows nothing of that kind of work—a man with two guns—think of it.
JACK. After he 's walked barehanded up to a couple of guns a few times, he 'll quit fearing men that are armed only with a scarf-pin.
HELEN. (*Hysterically.*) It 's cruel to keep constantly referring to that—that —mistake of Clay's—I want to forget it.
JACK. (*Going to* HELEN. *Tenderly.*) The way to forget it, my dear Helen, is not to guard it as a sensitive spot in your memory, but to grasp it as the wise ones grasp a nettle—crush all its power to harm you in one courageous contact. We think things are calamities and trials and sorrows—only names. They are spiritual gymnastics and have an eternal value when once you front them and make them crouch at your feet. Say once for all to your soul and thereby to the world—"Yes, my boy killed a man—because I 'd brought him up a half-effeminate, hysterical weakling, but he 's been through the fire and I 've been through the fire, and we 're both the better for it."
HELEN. I can say that truthfully, but I don't want to make a policeman of him, just the same. (*Exit to dining-room.*)
ALICE. (*Following.*) Your treatment 's a little too heroic, Jack. (*Exit.*)
LEW. Think they 'll fetch him?
JACK. (*Sits left of table.*) Yes.
LEW. He 'll come, of course, if he does, under the idea that you 'll help him when he gets here.
JACK. Yes.
LEW. Pretty hard double-cross, but he deserves it. I 've got a note of fifteen thousand to meet to-morrow, or, damn it, I don't think I 'd fancy this man-hunting. I put up some Louisville-Nashville bonds for security, and the holder of the note 'll be only too anxious to pinch 'em.
JACK. You can't get your rewards in time for that.
LEW. I know—and that 's one reason I come to you, Jack. If you see I 'm in a fair way to get a reward—
JACK. I 'll lend you money, Lew.
LEW. Thank you. (JACK *takes checkbook and writes.*) I thought you would! If I lose those bonds they 'll have me selling programs for a livin' at a grand stand. You see, I thought hatin' Hardmuth as you do, and your reputation bein' up through that stuff to the papers—
JACK. There. (*Gives check.*)
LEW. Thank you, old man. I 'll hand this back to you in a week.
JACK. (*Rises.*) You need n't.
LEW. What?
JACK. You need n't hand it back. It 's only fifteen thousand and you 've lost a hundred of them at poker in these rooms.
LEW. Never belly-ached, did I?
JACK. Never—but you don't owe me that fifteen.
LEW. Rot! I 'm no baby—square game was n't it?
JACK. Perfectly.
LEW. And I 'll sit in a square game any time I get a chance.
JACK. I know, Lew, all about that.
LEW. I 'll play you for this fifteen right away. (*Displays check.*)
JACK. No. (*Walks aside.*)
LEW. Ain't had a game in three weeks —and, besides, I think my luck 's changin'? When Big George told me about

Hardmuth I took George's hand before I thought what I was doin'—and you know what shakin' hands with a nigger does just before any play.

JACK. (*Resisting* LEW'S *plea.*) No, thank you, Lew.

LEW. My money 's good as anybody else's, ain't it?

JACK. Just as good, but—

LEW. It ain't a phoney check, is it?

(*Examines check.*)

JACK. The check 's all right.

LEW. (*Taunting.*) Losing your nerves?

JACK. No (*pause*)—suppose you shuffle those and deal a hand.

(*Indicates small table, right.*)

LEW. That 's like old times; what is it—stud-horse or draw? (*Sits at table.*)

JACK. (*Goes to fireplace.*) Draw if you say so.

LEW. I cut 'em?

JACK. You cut them.

LEW. (*Dealing two poker hands.*) Table stakes—check goes for a thousand.

JACK. That suits me.

LEW. (*Taking his own cards.*) Sit down.

JACK. (*At other side of room looking into fire.*) I don't need to sit down just yet.

LEW. As easy as that, am I?

JACK. Lew!

LEW. Yes?

JACK. (*Pause.*) Do you happen to have three queens?

(LEW *looks at* JACK, *then carefully at back of his own cards, then at the deck.*)

LEW. Well, I can't see it.

JACK. No use looking—they 're not marked.

LEW. Well, I shuffled 'm all right.

JACK. Yes.

LEW. And cut 'm? (JACK *nods.*) Could n't 'a' been a cold deck?

JACK. No.

LEW. Then, how did you know I had three queens?

JACK. I did n't know it. I just thought you had.

LEW. Can you do it again?

JACK. I don't know. Draw one card.

LEW. (*Drawing one card from deck.*) All right.

JACK. (*Pause.*) Is it the ace of hearts?

LEW. It is.

JACK. Mm—turns me into a rotter, does n't it?

(*Comes gloomily to the big table.*)

LEW. Can you do that every time?

JACK. I never tried it until to-night—that is, consciously. I 've always had luck and I thought it was because I took chances on a game—same as any player—but that don't look like it, does it?

LEW. Beats me.

JACK. And what a monster it makes of me—these years I 've been in the business.

LEW. You say you did n't know it before?

JACK. I did n't know it—no—but—some things have happened lately that have made me think it might be so; that jury yesterday—some facts I 've had from Justice Prentice. Telepathy of a very common kind—and I guess it 's used in a good many games, old man, we are n't on to.

LEW. Well—have you told anybody?

JACK. No.

LEW. (*Excitedly.*) Good! (*Rises and comes to* JACK.) Now, see here, Jack, if you can do that right along I know a game in Cincinnati where it 'd be like takin' candy from children.

JACK. Good God! you 're not suggesting that I keep it up?

LEW. Don't over-do it—no—(*Pause.*) Or you show me the trick and *I 'll* collect all right.

JACK. (*Slowly.*) Lew—(*Pause.*) Some of the fellows I 've won from in this house have gone over to the park and blown their heads off.

LEW. Some of the fellows anybody wins from in any house go somewhere and blow their heads off.

JACK. True— (*Pause.*)

LEW. Three queens—before the draw—well, you could 'a' had me all right—and you won't tell me how you do it?

JACK. I don't know how I do it; the thought just comes to my mind stronger than any other thought.

LEW. (*Reprovingly.*) God A'mighty gives you a mind like that and you won't go with me to Cincinnati.

(*Goes to card table; studies cards.*)

(*Enter* Jo.)

Jo. Justice Prentice, sah.

JACK. Ask him to step up here.

Jo. Yes, sah. (*Exit.*)

JACK. (*Goes to door, left.*) Alice—Helen—Justice Prentice has called; I 'd like you to join us.

LEW. Can the old man call a hand like that, too?

JACK. I 'm sure he could.

LEW. And—are there others?

JACK. I believe there are a good many

others who unconsciously have the same ability.

LEW. Well, it's a God's blessin' there's a sucker born every minute. I'm a widow and an orphan 'longside o' that.

(*Throws cards in disgust onto table.*)

(*Enter* ALICE *and* HELEN.)

ALICE. Been losing, Mr. Ellinger?

LEW. Losing? I just saved fifteen thousand I was gonta throw 'way like sand in a rathole. I'm a babe eatin' spoon victuals and only gettin' half at that.

(*Enter* PRENTICE.)

JACK. Good-evening.

PRENTICE. Good-evening.

(*Shakes hands with* ALICE *and* HELEN.)

JACK. I stopped at your hotel, Mr. Justice, but you were out.

(*Enter* VIOLA.)

ALICE. (*Anxiously.*) Viola.

HELEN. Where's Clay?

VIOLA. Downstairs. Good-evening.

PRENTICE. Good-evening.

JACK. (*To others.*) Pardon. (*To* VIOLA.) Did the—gentleman come with you?

VIOLA. Yes.

(LEW *flutters and shows excitement.*)

JACK. Won't you ask Clay, my dear, to take him through the lower hall and into the dining-room until I'm at liberty?

VIOLA. Certainly. (*Exit.*)

PRENTICE. I am keeping you from other appointments?

JACK. Nothing that can't wait.

PRENTICE. I am leaving for Washington in the morning.

JACK. We'll all be at the train to see you off.

PRENTICE. That's good, because I should like to say good-bye to—to the young people—I can see them there—I shan't see you then, Mr. Ellinger—

(*Goes to* LEW, *who stands at card table.*)

LEW. Good-bye, Judge—you—you've given me more of a "turn over" than you know.

PRENTICE. Really?

LEW. I'd 'a' saved two hundred thousand dollars if I'd 'a' met you thirty years ago.

PRENTICE. Well, that's only about six thousand a year, isn't it?

LEW. That's so—and, damn it, I have lived.

(*Smiles—looks dreamily into the past.*)

PRENTICE. Good-night. (*Exit* PRENTICE.)

JACK. Good-night—good-night.

ALICE. Is that Hardmuth in there?

(*Points to dining-room.*)

JACK. Yes.

ALICE. I don't want to see him.

JACK. Very well, dear, I'll excuse you.

ALICE. (*Going.*) Come, Helen.

JACK. (*At door, left.*) Come in. (*To* HELEN, *who is going with* ALICE.) Helen! I'd like *you* to stay.

HELEN. Me?

JACK. Yes. (*Exit* ALICE.)

(*Enter* CLAY, HARDMUTH, *and* VIOLA. VIOLA *lays automobile coat on sofa.* HARDMUTH *bows to* HELEN. HELEN *bows.*)

JACK. Your mother has just left us, Viola. You'd better join her.

VIOLA. Very well.

JACK. (*Taking her hand as she passes him.*) And I want you to know—I appreciate very much, my dear, your going on this errand for me—you're the right stuff. (*Kisses her. Exit* VIOLA. *To* HARDMUTH.) You're trying to get away?

HARDMUTH. This your note?

JACK. Yes.

HARDMUTH. You say you'll help me out of the State?

JACK. I will.

HARDMUTH. When?

JACK. Whenever you're ready.

HARDMUTK. I'm ready now.

JACK. Then I'll help you now.

LEW. Now?

JACK. Yes.

HELEN. Does n't that render you liable in some way, Jack, to the law?

JACK. Yes—but I've been liable to the law in some way for the last twenty years. (*To* CLAY.) You go down and tell the chauffeur to leave the machine and walk home. I'm going to run it myself and I'll turn it in.

CLAY. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

HARDMUTH. You're going to run it yourself?

JACK. Yes.

HARDMUTH. Where to?

JACK. Across the river, if that's agreeable to you—or any place you name.

HARDMUTH. Is anybody—waiting for you—across the river?

JACK. No.

HARDMUTH. (*Again with note.*) This is all on the level?

JACK. Completely.

LEW. Why, I think you mean that.

JACK. I do.

LEW. (*Aggressively.*) But I've got something to say, have n't I?

JACK. I hope not.

LEW. (*Quitting.*) If you 're in earnest, of course. But I don't see your game.

JACK. I 'm not fully convinced of Mr. Hardmuth's guilt.

LEW. Why, he 's running away?

(*Enter* CLAY.)

HARDMUTH. I know what a case they 'd make against me, but I 'm not guilty in any degree.

JACK. I want to do this thing for you, Frank—don't make it too difficult by any lying. When I said I was n't fully convinced of your guilt, my reservation was one you would n't understand. (*To* CLAY.) He gone?

CLAY. Yes.

JACK. My coat and goggles?

CLAY. Below in the reception-room.

JACK. Thank you. I wish now you 'd go to Viola and her mother and keep them wherever they are.

CLAY. All right. (*Exit.*)

JACK. (*To* HARDMUTH.) Hungry?

(*Touches push button.*)

HARDMUTH. No, thank you.

JACK. Got money?

HARDMUTH. Yes.

(*Enter* JO.)

JACK. Jo, take Mr. Hardmuth below and lend him one of the fur coats. (*To* HARDMUTH.) I 'll join you immediately.

(*Exit* HARDMUTH *with* JO.)

HELEN. What does it all mean, Jack?

JACK. Lew, I called that ace of hearts, did n't I?

LEW. And the three queens.

JACK. Because the three queens and the ace were in your mind.

LEW. I don't see any other explanation.

JACK. Suppose, instead of the cards there 'd been in your mind a well-developed plan of assassination—the picture of a murder—

LEW. Did you drop to him that way?

JACK. No. Raynor told me all I know of Hardmuth—but here 's the very *hell* of it. Long before Scovill was killed I thought he deserved killing and I thought it *could* be done just—as—it—was done.

HELEN. Jack!

JACK. I never breathed a word of it to a living soul, but Hardmuth planned it exactly as I dreamed it—and by God, a guilty thought is almost as criminal as a guilty deed. I 've always had a considerable influence over that poor devil that 's running away to-night, and I 'm not sure that before the Judge of both of us the guilt is n't mostly mine.

HELEN. That 's morbid, Jack, dear, perfectly morbid.

JACK. I hope it is—we 'll none of us ever know—in this life—but we can all of us— (*Pause.*)

LEW. What?

JACK. Live as if it were true. (*Change of manner to brisk command.*) I 'm going to help him over the line—the roads are watched, but the police won't suspect me and they won't suspect Lew—and all the less if there 's a lady with us—(*To* LEW.) Will you go?

LEW. The limit.

JACK. Get a heavy coat from Jo.

LEW. Yes. (*Exit.*)

JACK. (*Alone with* HELEN.) You know you said I used to be able to make you write to me when I was a boy at college?

HELEN. Yes.

JACK. And you were a thousand miles away—while this fellow—Hardmuth—was just at my elbow half the time.

HELEN. It can't help you to brood over it.

JACK. It can help me to know it, and make what amend I can. Will you go with me while I put this poor devil over the line?

HELEN. (*Taking* VIOLA'S *fur coat.*) Yes, I 'll go with you.

JACK. Helen, you stood by your boy in a fight for his life.

HELEN. Did n't you?

JACK. Will you stand by *me* while I make my fight?

HELEN. (*Giving her hand.*) You 've made your fight, Jack, and you 've won.

(JACK *kisses her hand, which he reverently holds in both of his.*)

THE FAITH HEALER

BY

William Vaughn Moody

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THE FAITH HEALER

The Faith Healer represents the drama of revolt, in which the protest of the individual is made against the controlling power of social law and custom. Only as long as the "Faith Healer" has confidence in himself does his power survive the ever-present disbelief of the world. This drama of revolt found its most powerful expression in the work of a group of dramatists to which Mr. Moody, Mr. George Cabot Lodge, and, to a certain extent, Mr. Percy MacKaye, belonged.

William Vaughn Moody was born at Spencer, Indiana, July 8, 1869, the son of Francis Burdette Moody, a steamboat captain, and Henrietta Stoy, to whom he pays such an exquisite tribute in "The Daguerreotype." He was brought up in the town of New Albany, Indiana, and after teaching in a neighboring school, came east to Riverside Academy, New York, where he also taught while preparing to enter Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1893. Having already completed his work for the bachelor's degree in 1892 he travelled in Europe for a year and then returning to the Graduate School at Harvard University he took his master's degree in 1894. After being a member of the Department of English at Harvard for a year, he became Instructor in English at the University of Chicago in 1895 and remained there, as Instructor and Assistant Professor, until 1903. Two European trips occurred during this period and Mr. Moody's poems, especially the lyrics and the verse plays, show the result of the experiences encountered in his wanderings. Notwithstanding his success as a teacher and lecturer, he gave up active work at the University of Chicago after 1902, retaining merely a nominal connection with the English department. He felt that his best work was to be done as a poet and to do that work well he must have freedom from academic drudgery. His *History of English Literature* written in collaboration with Robert M. Lovett, and the publications of which he was editor, served simply to provide him with the means to devote himself to poetry. Already he had become recognized through his poems on public affairs, such as the "Ode in Time of Hesitation," as one of the foremost of American poets, and though his first volume, published in 1902, contained only a small number of poems, this was due to his capacity for selection rather than to lack of inspiration.

Mr. Moody's early death, which occurred at Colorado Springs, October 17, 1910, cut short his career just as his work was reaching its best development. His lyrics are exquisite and at times magnificent in their phrasing. In the poems on public affairs he expresses true patriotism and concern for his country's fidelity to her ideals. In his love poetry he shows deep insight into the emotional

phases of life. Besides the lyrics he had to his credit the verse dramas, and the prose plays with which his widest public notice came. *The Fire Bringer,* which celebrated the sacrifice of Prometheus in bringing fire to mankind; *The Masque of Judgment,* which had for its theme the conquest of all things by the serpent; and the incomplete fragment, *The Death of Eve,* were to have formed a trilogy in which the relations of God and man were to have been developed dramatically, according to the modern doctrine of revolt. The plays in verse show the influence of the Greek drama, and, as is the case with all Mr. Moody's work, the influence of Puritanism and the reaction against it. *The Fire Bringer* was written with the idea of actual stage production.

As early as 1898 Mr. Moody had begun to think of the theme of a faith healer as a fit subject for a play, which at first he planned to write in verse. He put aside this theme for a time, however, to write *The Great Divide,* which was performed first under the title of *The Sabine Woman* by Miss Margaret Anglin in Chicago, April, 1906. It was afterward played at the Princess Theatre, New York, in October, 1906, by Mr. Henry Miller and Miss Anglin and had a long run there and throughout the United States. In September, 1909, it was produced for a short run at the Adelphi Theatre in London. *The Great Divide* portrayed the conflict of the ideals of Puritanism, with its capacity of self-torture, and the freer conceptions of life prevalent in the West.

The Faith Healer was first played in St. Louis on March 15, 1909. It was put on at the Savoy Theatre, New York, January 19, 1910, and was played at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on January 24, 1910. It was not a popular success but it is a significant play. The situation is dramatic and the handling convincing, while the native quality of the play is apparent. The struggle which is the essential part of every drama occurs here between human love and the dedication to a purpose and is only incidentally associated with the religious type. The obvious means of ending the struggle would have been to have "The Healer" either renounce love for his dedicated purpose or renounce the purpose in favor of his love. Mr. Moody with a finer art shows in the play that love and work are not necessarily irreconcilable interests and that by substituting for the selfishness of a personal claim the more impersonal and unselfish type of love, the hero could make a resolution of his problem which included every aspect of a man's life.

The most convenient form in which to read Mr. Moody's work is in the complete edition, the *Poems and Plays of William Vaughn Moody,* in two volumes, published by the Houghton, Mifflin Company in 1912. This edition contains a study of Mr. Moody's work and a brief biography by Professor John M. Manly, to whom the present editor acknowledges his indebtedness. The separate publications of Mr. Moody include *The Masque of Judgment* (1900), *Poems* (1902),

The Fire Bringer (1904), *The Great Divide* (1909), and *The Faith Healer* (1909) and (1910). An interesting volume entitled *Some Letters of William Vaughn Moody,* edited by Daniel E. Mason, was published in 1913. For general criticism of Moody's work, see articles by N. O. Barr, *The Lyrist and Lyric Dramatist,* and by C. H. Caffin, *The Dramatist,* in *The Drama,* No. 2, May, 1911. For criticism of *The Faith Healer* see *The Nation,* vol. 88, pp. 175–76, Feb., 1909, *Hampton's Magazine,* Vol. 24, pp. 561–65, April, 1910. Criticism of *The Great Divide* is found in *The Nation,* Vol. 89, p. 387, October, 1909, and by B. R. Hertz in *The Forum,* vol. 43, pp. 90–92, Jan., 1910.

Mrs. Moody has kindly revised the text of the edition of 1912 for the present editor, who gratefully acknowledges her courtesy in obtaining for him the right to reprint the play and for valuable biographical information.

Note to Fourth Edition.

For a discussion of Moody's place at the head of the dramatic impulses of the Twentieth Century, see the present editor's *History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* Vol 2, pp. 1–17.

THE ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

St. Louis, March 15, 1909

ULRICH MICHAELIS.....Mr. Henry Miller
MATTHEW BEELER.....Mr. William J. Butler
MARY BEELER, his wife.....Miss Gertrude Berkeley
MARTHA BEELER, his sister.....Miss Lillian Dix
ANNIE BEELER, his daughter.....Miss Gladys Heulette
RHODA WILLIAMS, MRS. BEELER'S niece.....Miss Thais Lawton
DR. GEORGE LITTLEFIELD.....Mr. George Saule Spencer
REV. JOHN CULPEPPER.....Mr. Henry Hanscombe
UNCLE ABE, an old negro.....Mr. James Kirkwood
LAZARUS, an Indian boy.....Mr. Henry B. Walthall
A YOUNG MOTHER WITH HER CHILD.....Miss Laura Hope Crews

Various sick people and others attendant upon them.

THE FAITH HEALER

ACT FIRST.

A large old-fashioned room in MATTHEW BEELER'S *farm-house, near a small town in the Middle West. The room is used for dining and for general living purposes. It suggests, in architecture and furnishings, a past of considerable prosperity, which has now given place to more humble living. The house is, in fact, the ancestral home of* MR. BEELER'S *wife,* MARY, *born Beardsley, a family of the local farming aristocracy, now decayed. At the rear is a large double window, set in a broad alcove. To the right of the window is the entrance door, which opens upon the side yard, showing bushes, trees, and farm buildings.*

In the right wall of the room a door and covered stairway lead to the upper story. Farther forward is a wall cupboard, and a door leading into the kitchen. Opposite this cupboard in the left-hand wall of the room, is a mantel-piece and grate; farther back a double door, leading to a hall. Off the hall open two bedrooms (not seen), one belonging to MR. *and* MRS. BEELER, *the other to* RHODA WILLIAMS, *a niece of* MRS. BEELER, *child of her dead sister.*

The room contains, among other articles of furniture, a dining table (with detachable leaves to reduce its bulk when not in use for eating purposes), an invalid's wheel-chair, a low sofa of generous size, and a book-shelf, upon which are arranged the scientific books which MR. BEELER *takes a somewhat untutored but genuine delight in. Tacked upon the wall near by are portraits of scientific men, Darwin and Spencer conspicuous among them, cut from periodicals. Other pictures, including family daguerreotypes and photographs, are variously distributed about the walls. Over the mantel shelf hangs a large map of the United States and Mexico, faded and fly-specked.*

As the curtain rises, the room is dark, except for a dull fire in the grate. The ticking of the clock is heard; it strikes six. MARTHA BEELER, *a woman of forty-five, enters from the kitchen, carrying a lighted lamp. She wears a shawl over her shoulders, a print dress, and a kitchen apron. She places the lamp on the table, which is set for breakfast, and puts coal on the grate, which soon flames more brightly.*

She goes into the hall and is heard knocking and calling.

MARTHA. Rhody! Rhody! (MATTHEW BEELER, *a man of fifty, enters. He is not quite dressed, but finishes as he comes in.* MARTHA *follows him.*) Where's that niece of yours got to now?

BEELER. She's helping Mary dress.

MARTHA. What in time's Mary gettin' up for? She's only in the way till the work's done.

BEELER. She's restless.

MARTHA. (*Significantly.*) I should n't wonder. (*Pause.*) I hope you know *why* Mary did n't sleep.

BEELER. (*Evasively.*) She's always been a light sleeper, since she got her stroke.

MARTHA. Look here, Mat Beeler! I'm your born sister. Don't try to fool me! You know why your wife did n't sleep last night.

BEELER. Maybe I do, Sis. (*Points to the ceiling.*) Is he up yet?

MARTHA. Up! I don't believe he's been abed. (*They listen, as to the tread of some one on the floor above.*) Back and forth, like a tiger in a cage!

BEELER. (*Shrugs.*) Queer customer.

MARTHA. Yes. (*Imitates him.*) "Queer customer," that's you. But come to doin' anything about it!

BEELER. Give me time, Sis, give me time!

MARTHA. How much time do you want? He's been in this house since Wednesday night, and this is Saturday morning.

BEELER. Well, he's payin' his board, ain't he? (*At window, rolls up curtain.*) Goin' to have just such another day as yesterday. Never seen such a fog.

MARTHA. Never seen such a fog, eh? (*Comes nearer and speaks mysteriously.*)

Did you happen to notice how long that fog has been hangin' over this house?

BEELER. How long? Why, since Thursday.

MARTHA. No, sir, since Wednesday night.

BEELER. (*Looking at her, astonished.*) Martha Beeler! You don't mean to say—he *brought* the fog? (*She flounces out without answering. He lights lantern, with dubious head-shaking, and holds it up before the print portraits.*) Mornin', Mr. Darwin. Same to you, Mr. Spencer. Still keepin' things straight? (*Grunts as he turns down his lantern, which is smoking.*) I guess not very.

(*The hall door again opens, and* RHODA WILLIAMS, *a girl of twenty, enters, with* ANNIE BEELER, *a child of ten.* RHODA *is running, with* ANNIE *in laughing pursuit.*)

RHODA. (*Taking refuge behind the table.*) King's X!

ANNIE. (*Catching her.*) You did n't have your fingers crossed.

RHODA. (*Turning* ANNIE *about, and beginning to button the child's long slip.*) And you did n't have your dress buttoned.

ANNIE. That does n't count.

RHODA. Yes, it does, before breakfast!

BEELER. (*At the outer door.*) How does your aunt strike you this morning?

RHODA. (*Sobered.*) She seems wonderfully better.

BEELER. Better!

RHODA. I don't mean her poor body. She 's got past caring for that.

BEELER. (*With sarcasm.*) You mean in her mind, eh?

RHODA. Yes, I mean better in her mind.

BEELER. Because of what this fellow has been sayin' to her, I suppose.

RHODA. Yes, because of that.

BEELER. (*As he puts on an old fur cap.*) An out-and-out fakir!

RHODA. You don't know him.

BEELER. I suppose you do, after forty-eight hours. What in the name of nonsense is he, anyway? And this deaf and dumb Indian boy he drags around with him. What 's his part in the show?

RHODA. I know very little about either of them. But I know Mr. Michaelis is not—what you say.

BEELER. Well, he 's a crank at the best of it. He 's worked your aunt up now so 's she can't sleep. You brought him here, and you 've got to get rid of him. (*Exit by outer door, with inarticulate grumblings, among which can be distinguished.*) Hump! Ulrich Michaelis! There 's a name for you.

ANNIE. What 's a fakir? (RHODA *does not answer.*) Cousin Rho, what 's a fakir?

RHODA. (*Humoring her.*) A man, way off on the other side of the world, in India, who does strange things.

ANNIE. What kind of things?

RHODA. Well, for instance, he throws a rope up in the air, right up in the empty air, with nothing for it to catch on, and then—he—climbs—up—the—rope!

ANNIE. Don't he fall?

(RHODA *shakes her head in portentous negation. Steps are heard descending the stairs. The child fidgets nervously.*)

ANNIE. Listen! He 's coming down!

RHODA. Yes, he 's coming down, right out of the blue sky.

ANNIE. (*In a panic.*) Let me go.

(*She breaks away and retreats to the hall door, watching the stair door open, and* ULRICH MICHAELIS *enter. Thereupon, with a glance of frightened curiosity, she flees.* MICHAELIS *is a man of twenty-eight or thirty, and his dark, emaciated face, wrinkled by sun and wind, looks older. His abundant hair is worn longer than common. His frame, though slight, is powerful, and his way of handling himself has the freedom and largeness which come from much open-air life. There is nevertheless something nervous and restless in his movements. He has a trick of handling things, putting them down only to take them up again immediately, before renouncing them for good. His face shows the effect of sleeplessness, and his gray flannel shirt and dark, coarse clothing are rumpled and neglected.*)

RHODA. (*As he enters.*) Good morning.

MICHAELIS. (*Watching* ANNIE'S *retreat.*) Is—is that child afraid of me?

RHODA. (*As she adds the finishing touches to the breakfast table.*) Oh, Annie 's a queer little body. She has her mother's nerves. And then she sees no one, living here on the back road. If this dreadful fog ever lifts, you 'll see that, though we 're quite near town, it 's almost as if we were in the wilderness. (*The stair door opens, and an Indian boy, about*

sixteen years old, enters. He is dressed in ordinary clothes; his dark skin, long-ish hair, and the noiseless tread of his moccasined feet, are the only suggestions of his race. He bows to RHODA, *who returns his salutation; then, with a glance at* MICHAELIS, *he goes out doors.* RHODA *nods toward the closing door.*) It's really him Annie's afraid of. He's like a creature from another world, to her.

MICHAELIS. (*Looks at her in an odd, startled way.*) Another world?

RHODA. Oh, you're used to his people. Your father was a missionary to the Indians, you told me.

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. Where?

MICHAELIS. At Acoma.

RHODA. Where is that?

MICHAELIS. (*Standing near the wall map, touches it.*) In New Mexico, by the map.

RHODA. (*Comes nearer.*) What is it like?

MICHAELIS. It's—as you say—another world.

RHODA. Describe it to me.

MICHAELIS. I could n't make you see it. It's—centuries and centuries from our time.—And since I came here, since I entered this house, it has seemed centuries away from my own life.

RHODA. My life has seemed far off, too—my old life—

MICHAELIS. What do you mean by your old life?

RHODA. (*She breaks out impulsively.*) I mean—I mean—. Three days ago I was like one dead! I walked and ate and did my daily tasks, but—I wondered sometimes why people did n't see that I was dead, and scream at me.

MICHAELIS. It was three days ago that I first saw you.

RHODA. Yes.

MICHAELIS. Three nights ago, out there in the moonlit country.

RHODA. Yes.

MICHAELIS. You were unhappy, then?

RHODA. The dead are not unhappy, and I was as one dead.

MICHAELIS. Why was that?

RHODA. I think we die more than once when things are too hard and too bitter.

MICHAELIS. Have things here been hard and bitter?

RHODA. No. All that was before I came here! But it had left me feeling—. The other night, as I walked through the streets of the town, the people seemed like ghosts to me, and I myself like a ghost.

MICHAELIS. I cannot think of you as anything but glad and free.

RHODA. When you met me on the road, and walked home with me, and said those few words, it was as if, all of a sudden, the dead dream was shattered, and I began once more to live. (*Bell rings.*) That is Aunt Mary's bell

(RHODA *goes out by the hall door, wheeling the invalid chair.* MARTHA *enters from the kitchen, carrying a steaming coffee-pot and a platter of smoking meat, which she places on the table.* MICHAELIS *bows to her.*)

MARTHA. (*Snappishly.*) Hope you slept well!

(*She goes to the outer door, rings the breakfast bell loudly, and exits to kitchen.* RHODA *enters, wheeling* MRS. BEELER *in an invalid chair.* MRS. BEELER *is a woman of forty, slight of body, with hair just beginning to silver. Her face has the curious refinement which physical suffering sometimes brings.* ANNIE *lingers at the door, looking timidly at* MICHAELIS, *as he approaches* MRS. BEELER *and takes her hand from the arm of the chair.*)

MICHAELIS. You are better?

MRS. BEELER. (*Speaks with low intensity.*) Much, much better.

(*He puts her hand gently back on the chair arm.* MARTHA *enters with other dishes. She pours out coffee, putting a cup at each plate.* MR. BEELER *has entered from the kitchen, and the boy from outside.* BEELER, *with a glance of annoyance at his wife and* MICHAELIS, *sits down at the head of the table.* RHODA *pushes* MRS. BEELER'S *chair to the foot of the table and stands feeding her, eating her own breakfast meanwhile.*

(MICHAELIS *sits at* MRS. BEELER'S *right,* MARTHA *opposite. At* MR. BEELER'S *right is the Indian boy, at his left* ANNIE'S *vacant chair.* MARTHA *beckons to* ANNIE *to come to the table, but the child, eyeing the strangers, refuses, taking a chair behind her mother by the mantelpiece.* MRS. BEELER *speaks after the meal has progressed for some time in silence.*)

MRS. BEELER. Mat, you have n't said good morning to our guest.

BEELER. (*Gruffly.*) How are you?

(*He helps himself to meat and passes it to the others; the plate goes round the table. There is a constrained silence.* ANNIE *tugs at* RHODA'S *skirt, and asks in dumb show to have her breakfast given her.* RHODA *fills the child's plate, with which she retreats to her place by the mantel.*)

MRS. BEELER. Why does n't Annie come to the table? (*She tries to look around.* RHODA *whispers to* MRS. BEELER, *who looks at her, puzzled.*) *Why* does n't Annie come?

RHODA. She 's afraid.

MRS. BEELER. Afraid! What is she afraid of?

RHODA. You know how shy she is, before strangers.

MRS. BEELER. Annie, please come here! Annie!

(*The child refuses, pouting, and gazing at* MICHAELIS.)

RHODA. I would n't urge her. She does n't want to come.

MARTHA. (*Trenchantly.*) Don't blame her!

MRS. BEELER. (*Gently reproving.*) Martha!

MICHAELIS. (*Holding out his hand to* ANNIE.) Won't you come here, my child? (ANNIE *approaches slowly, as if hypnotized.*) You 're not afraid of me, are you?

ANNIE. (*Shyly.*) Not if you won't climb up the rope.

MICHAELIS. (*Puzzled.*) Climb up what rope?

RHODA. It 's a story I was foolish enough to tell her.—Do eat something, Auntie.

MRS BEELER. I 'll drink a little more tea.

(RHODA *raises the cup to* MRS. BEELER'S *lips.*)

BEELER. You can't live on tea, Mary.

MARTHA. I guess she can live on tea better than on some things! (*With a resentful glance at* MICHAELIS.) Some things that some folks seem to live on, and expect other folks to live on.

(MICHAELIS *looks up from* ANNIE, *who has been whispering in his ear.* BEELER *nods at* MARTHA *in covert approval, as she takes up dishes and goes into the kitchen.*)

MRS. BEELER. (*Leans forward across the table to* MICHAELIS.) Don't mind my sister-in-law, Mr. Michaelis. It 's her way. She means nothing by it

BEELER. (*Between gulps of coffee, as he finishes his meal.*) Don't know as you 've got any call to speak for Martha. She generally means what she says, and I guess she means it now. And what 's more, I guess I do, too!

MRS. BEELER. (*Beseechingly.*) Mat!

BEELER. (*Throws down his napkin and rises.*) Very well. It 's none of my business, I reckon, as long as it keeps within reason.

(*He puts on his cap and goes out through the kitchen.*)

ANNIE. (*To* MICHAELIS, *continuing the whispered conversation.*) And if you do climb up the rope, do you promise to come down?

MICHAELIS. Yes, I promise to come down.

MRS. BEELER. (*Leans over her plate. The others bow their heads.*) Bless this food to our use, and this day to our strength and our salvation.

RHODA. (*As they lift their heads.*) Perhaps it will be light enough now without the lamp.

(MICHAELIS, *holding* ANNIE'S *hand, rises, goes to the window, and rolls up the shades, while* RHODA *extinguishes the lamp. The fog is still thick, and the light which enters is dull.* RHODA *unpins the napkin from her aunt's breast, and wheels her back from the table. The boy crouches down by the grate, Indian fashion.* ANNIE *looks at him with shy, half-frightened interest.*)

MRS. BEELER. (*Gazing out, from where she sits reclining.*) The blessed sun! I never thought to see it rise again so beautiful.

RHODA. (*Looks at her aunt, puzzled and alarmed.*) But, Auntie, there is n't any sun! It 's—

(*She breaks off, seeing* MICHAELIS *place his fingers on his lips as a signal for her to be silent.* MRS. BEELER *turns to* RHODA, *puzzled.*)

MRS. BEELER. There is n't any sun? Why—(RHODA *pretends not to hear.* MRS. BEELER *turns to* MICHAELIS.) What does she mean by saying there is no sun?

MICHAELIS. She means she does n't see it.

MRS. BEELER. (*Still puzzled.*) But—you see it, don't you?

MICHAELIS. I see the same sun that you see.

MRS. BEELER. (*Looks again at* RHODA, *then dismisses her wonderment, and looks out at the window dreamily.*) Another day—and to-morrow the best of all the days of the year.

ANNIE. What day is to-morrow? (*She leaves* MICHAELIS *and comes to her mother's side.*) What day is to-morrow?

MRS. BEELER. (*With exultation in her voice.*) My child, to-morrow is the most wonderful and the most beautiful day of all the year. The day when—all over the whole world—there is singing in the air, and everything rises into new life and happiness.

ANNIE. (*Fretfully.*) Mamma, I don't understand! What day is to-morrow?

MRS. BEELER. To-morrow is Easter.

ANNIE. (*With sudden interest.*) Easter! Can I have some eggs to color?

MRS. BEELER. Ask Aunt Martha.

ANNIE. (*Singsong, as she skips out.*) Eggs to color! Eggs to color!

(RHODA *has meanwhile fetched a large tray from the cupboard and has been piling the dishes noiselessly upon it.*)

RHODA. Shall I wheel you in, Aunt Mary?

MRS. BEELER. Yes, please. (RHODA *wheels the chair toward the hall door, which* MICHAELIS *opens.* MRS. BEELER *gazes at him as she passes.*) Will you come in soon, and sit with me? There is so much that I want to hear.

MICHAELIS. Whenever you are ready.

MRS. BEELER. I will ring my bell.

(*As they go out,* MARTHA *bustles in, gathers up the dish tray and is about to depart, with a vindictive look. At the door she turns, and jerks her head toward the boy.*)

MARTHA. Is it against the law to work where he comes from?

MICHAELIS. (*Abstractedly.*) What?—No.

MARTHA. Then he might as well do me some chores. Not but right, payin' only half board.

MICHAELIS. (*To the boy.*) Do whatever she tells you. (*The boy follows* MARTHA *out.* MICHAELIS *stands by the window in thought. As* RHODA *reënters, he looks up. He speaks significantly, with suppressed excitement.*) She saw the sun!

RHODA. Poor dear Auntie!

MICHAELIS. You pity her?

RHODA. (*After an instant's silence, during which she ponders her reply.*) I think I envy her.

(*She removes the cloth from the table, and begins deftly to put the room in order.* MICHAELIS *watches her with a kind of vague intentness.*)

MICHAELIS. How long did you say she had been sick?

RHODA. More than four years—nearly five.

MICHAELIS. She has never walked in that time?

RHODA. (*Shakes her head.*) Nor used her right hand, either.

MICHAELIS. (*With intensity.*) Are you certain?

RHODA. (*Surprised at his tone.*) Yes—I haven't lived here long, but I am certain.

MICHAELIS. She has tried medicine, doctors?

RHODA. Uncle has spent everything he could earn on them. She has been three times to the mineral baths, once as far as Virginia.

MICHAELIS. But never as far as Bethesda?

RHODA. Bethesda? Where is that?

MICHAELIS. The pool, which is called Bethesda, having five porches.

RHODA. Oh, yes. The pool in the Bible, where once a year an angel troubled the waters, and the sick and the lame and the blind gathered, hoping to be healed.

MICHAELIS. And whoever first, after the troubling of the waters, stepped in, he was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

RHODA. If anybody could find the way there again, it would be Aunt Mary. (*Pause.*) And if anybody could show her the way it would be—you. (*She goes on in a different tone, as if to escape from the embarrassment of her last speech.*) Her saying just now she saw the sun. She often says things like that. Have you noticed?

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. (*With hesitation.*) Her brother Seth—the one who died—has she told you about him?

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. What she thinks happens—since—he died? (MICHAELIS *nods assent.*) And yet in most other ways her mind is perfectly clear.

MICHAELIS. Perhaps in this way it is clearer still.

RHODA. (*Startled.*) You mean—that maybe she really does—*see* her brother?

MICHAELIS. It may be.

RHODA. It would make the world a very

different—a very strange place, if that *were* true.

MICHAELIS. The world *is* a very strange place. (*Pause.*)

RHODA. Tell me a little about your life. That seems to have been very strange.

MICHAELIS. (*Vaguely, as he seats himself by the table.*) I don't know. I can hardly remember what my life was.

RHODA. Why is that?

MICHAELIS. (*Gazing at her.*) Because, since I came into this house, I have seen the vision of another life.

RHODA. (*With hesitation.*) What—other life?

MICHAELIS. Since my boyhood I have been—(*He hesitates.*) I have been a wanderer, almost a fugitive—. And I never knew it, till now—I never knew it till—I looked into your face!

RHODA. (*Avoiding his gaze.*) How should that make you know?

MICHAELIS. (*Leans nearer.*) All my life long I have walked in the light of something to come, some labor, some mission, I have scarcely known what—but I have risen with it and lain down with it, and nothing else has existed for me.—Nothing, until—I lifted my eyes and you stood there. The stars looked down from their places, the earth wheeled on among the stars. Everything was as it had been, and nothing was as it had been; nor ever, ever can it be the same again.

RHODA. (*In a low and agitated voice.*) You must not say these things to me. You are—I am not—. You must not think of me so.

MICHAELIS. I must think of you as I must. (*Pause.* RHODA *speaks in a lighter tone, as if to relieve the tension of their last words.*)

RHODA. Tell me a little of your boyhood.—What was it like—that place where you lived?

MICHAELIS. (*Becomes absorbed in his own mental pictures as he speaks.*) A great table of stone, rising five hundred feet out of the endless waste of sand. A little adobe house, halfway up the mesa, with the desert far below and the Indian village far above. A few peach trees, and a spring—a sacred spring, which the Indians worshipped in secret. A little chapel, which my father had built with his own hands. He often spent the night there, praying. And there, one night, he died. I found him in the morning, lying as if in quiet prayer before the altar.

RHODA. (*After a moment's hush.*) What did you do after your father died?

MICHAELIS. I went away south, into the mountains, and got work on a sheep range. I was a shepherd for five years.

RHODA. And since then?

MICHAELIS. (*Hesitates.*) Since then I have—wandered about, working here and there to earn enough to live on.

RHODA. I understand well why men take up that life. I should love it myself.

MICHAELIS. I did n't do it because I loved it.

RHODA. Why, then?

MICHAELIS. I was waiting my time.

RHODA. (*In a low tone.*) Your time—for what?

MICHAELIS. To fulfil my life—my real life.

RHODA. Your—real life? (*He sits absorbed in thought without answering.* RHODA *continues, after a long pause.*) There in the mountains, when you were a shepherd—that was not your real life?

MICHAELIS. It was the beginning of it.

RHODA. (*With hesitation.*) Won't you tell me a little about that time?

MICHAELIS. In the fall I would drive the sheep south, through the great basin which sloped down into Mexico, and in the spring back again to the mountains.

RHODA. Were you all alone?

MICHAELIS. There were a few men on the ranges, but they were no more to me than the sheep—not so much.

RHODA. Were n't you dreadfully lonely?

MICHAELIS. No.

RHODA. You had n't even any books to read?

MICHAELIS. (*Takes a book from his coat pocket.*) I had this pocket Bible, that had been my father's. I read that sometimes. But always in a dream, without understanding, without remembering. (*His excitement increases.*) Yet there came a time when whole chapters started up in my mind, as plain as if the printed page were before me, and I understood it all, both the outer meaning and the inner.

RHODA. And you did n't know what made the difference?

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. What was it?

MICHAELIS. I can't tell you that.

RHODA. Oh, yes!

MICHAELIS. There are no words to tell of it.

RHODA. Yet tell me. I need to know. Believe me, I need to know!

MICHAELIS. (*Slowly, groping for his words.*) It was one morning in the fourth spring. We were back in the mountains again. It was lambing time, and I had been up all night. Just before sunrise, I sat down on a rock to rest. Then—it came.

RHODA. What came? (*He does not answer.*) You saw something? (*He nods for yes.*) What was it?

MICHAELIS. (*Rises, lifting his arms, a prey to uncontrollable excitement.*) The living Christ!—Standing before me on the mountain, amid the grazing sheep.—With these eyes and in this flesh, I saw Him. (*Long pause.*)

RHODA. (*In a low tone.*) You had fallen asleep. It was a dream.

MICHAELIS. (*Shakes his head in negation.*) That was n't all.

(*He turns away. She follows him, and speaks after a silence.*)

RHODA. Tell me the rest. What happened to you, after—after what you saw—that morning in the mountains?

MICHAELIS. (*Begins to talk slowly and reluctantly.*) I lived straight ahead, with the sheep for two years.

RHODA. (*Hesitating.*) Did you ever *see* anything again?

MICHAELIS. No.—But twice—I heard a voice.

RHODA. What kind of a voice?

MICHAELIS. The first time it came at night. I was walking on the top of the mountain, in a stony place. It—it was like a wind among the stones.

RHODA. What did it say?

MICHAELIS. It said, "Prepare! Prepare!"

RHODA. And the second time?

MICHAELIS. In the same place, at dawn. The voice said, "Go forth, it is finished!" I looked round me and saw nothing. Then it came again, like a wind among the stones, "Go forth, it is begun!"

RHODA. And you obeyed?

MICHAELIS. I found a man to take my place, and started north. Three days after, I climbed the mesa toward my old home. Above, in the pueblo, I heard the sound of tom-toms and wailing squaws. They told me that the young son of the chief lay dead in my father's chapel. I sat beside him all day and all night. Just before daylight—

(*He breaks off abruptly.*)

RHODA. Go on!

MICHAELIS. Just before daylight, when the other watchers were asleep, the power of the spirit came strong upon me. I bowed myself upon the boy's body, and prayed. My heart burned within me, for I felt his heart begin to beat! His eyes opened. I told him to arise, and he arose. He that was dead arose and was alive again!

(*Pause.* MRS. BEELER'S *bell rings.* MICHAELIS *starts, looks about him as if awakened from a dream, then slowly goes toward the hall door.* RHODA *follows and detains him.*)

RHODA. (*In a low tone.*) How long had he lain—for dead?

MICHAELIS. Three days.

RHODA. (*With hesitation.*) I have heard that people have lain as long as that in a trance, breathing so lightly that it could not be told, except by holding a glass before the face.

MICHAELIS. (*Startled.*) Is that true?

RHODA. I have read so.

MICHAELIS. I wonder—I wonder. (*He stands in deep thought.*) But I have had other signs.

RHODA. What other signs?

MICHAELIS. Many, many. Up and down the land! (*Pause.*) I wonder.—I—I almost wish it were so!

(*With bent head he goes out.* RHODA *stands looking after him until the inner door closes, then sits before the fire in revery.* BEELER *comes in from the barn. He wears his old fur cap, and holds in one hand a bulky Sunday newspaper, in the other some battered harness, an awl, twine, and wax, which he deposits on the window seat. He lays the paper on the table, and unfolds from it a large colored print, which he holds up and looks at with relish.*)

BEELER. These Sunday papers do get up fine supplements. I would n't take money for that picture.

RHODA. (*Looks at it absently.*) What does it mean?

BEELER. (*Reads.*) "Pan and the Pilgrim." Guess you never heard of Pan, did you?

RHODA. Yes. One of the old heathen gods.

BEELER. Call him heathen if you like! The folks that worshipped him thought he was orthodox, I guess.

(*He pins up the print, which repre-*

sents a palmer of crusading times surprised in the midst of a forest by the god Pan.)

RHODA. What does the picture mean?

BEELER. Well, Pan there, he was a kind of a nature god. The old Romans thought him out, to stand for a lot of things.

RHODA. What kind of things?

BEELER. Natural things, with plenty of sap and mischief in 'em. Growin' plants, and frisky animals, and young folks in love. (*He points to the figure of Pan, then to the Pilgrim, as he talks.*) There he sits playin' Jenny-come-kiss-me on his dod-gasted mouth-organ, when along comes one of them fellows out of a monastery, with religion on the brain. Pikin' for Jerusalem, to get a saint's toe-nail and a splinter of the true cross. (MARTHA *enters from the kitchen and potters about the room "redding up."*) Look at him! Do you think he'll ever get to Jerusalem? Not this trip! He hears the pipes o' Pan. He hears women callin' and fiddles squeakin' love-tunes in the woods. It'll take more than a monk's robe on his back and a shaved head on his shoulders to keep him straight, I reckon. He'll call to mind that young fellows had blood in their veins when Adam was a farmer, and whoop-la! he'll be off to the county fair, to dance ring-around-a-rosy with Matildy Jane! (*Pause, as he takes off his cap and lights his pipe.*) Like to see our friend Michaelis meet up with Mr. Pan. Don't believe Michaelis ever looked cross-eyed at a girl. (*He examines* RHODA *quizzically.*) You would n't make up bad as Matildy Jane yourself, Rho, but sufferin' Job, he can't tell the difference between crow's feet and dimples!

MARTHA. Don't you be so sure!

BEELER. Hello! Dan'el come to judgment! Never seen an old maid yet that could n't squeeze a love story out of a flat-iron.

MARTHA. I may be an old maid, and you may be an old wind-bag, but I've got eyes in my head. (*To* RHODA.) Where did you meet up with him, anyway?

(RHODA, *plunged in thought, does not answer.*)

BEELER. Wake up, Rhody! Marthy asked you where you met up with our new boarder.

RHODA. On the road, coming home from the village.

BEELER. What made you bring him here?

RHODA. He wanted a quiet place to stay, and this was the best I knew.

MARTHA. Guess it was!—A snap for him. (*She goes out by the hall door.*)

(RHODA *rises, takes the lamp off the mantel, and during the following cleans and refills it.*)

BEELER. (*As he takes off his coat, and hangs it up.*) Rhody, ain't this religious business rather a new thing with you? Up there in St. Louis, did n't go in for it much up there, did you?

RHODA. (*Looks at him quickly.*) Why do you ask that?

BEELER. Oh, I gathered, from things I heard, that you cared more about dancin' than about prayin', up there. (*She turns away.*) That young fellow that was so sweet on you in St. Louis year before last, he wa' n't much in the psalm-singin' line, was he?

RHODA. (*Startled and pale.*) Who told you about him?

BEELER. Oh, Mary's friends, the Higginses, used to write us about your affairs. We thought it would be a hitch-up, sure as shootin'. Studyin' to be a doctor, was n't he?

RHODA. Uncle, please never speak to me about him again!

BEELER. All right, all right, my girl. I've been young myself, and I know youth is touchy as a gum-boil when it comes to love affairs. So it's all off, is it?

RHODA. Yes.

BEELER. (*Sits down to mend the harness.*) If you're partial to the pill trade, we've got a brand new doctor in town now. Took old Doctor Martin's place. He'll be up here to see Mary in a day or two, and you can look him over.

RHODA. What is his name?

BEELER. (*Tries in vain to recall it.*) Blamed if I can remember. Only seen him once. But I tell you, he's smart as tacks. Chuck full of Jamaica ginger. The very kind I'd have swore you'd take to, a while back, before you lost your fun and your spirit. When I first saw you on your father's farm out in Kansas, you was as wild a little gypsy as I ever set eyes on. I said then to your dad, "There's a filly that'll need a good breakin'." I never thought I'd see you takin' up with these Gospel pedlers.

(MARTHA *comes in from the hall and fusses about, dusting, etc. She points in the direction of* MRS. BEELER'S *room.*)

MARTHA. They 're prayer-meetin' it again. And Mary lyin' there as if she saw the pearly gates openin' before her eyes.

BEELER. (*Half to himself as he works.*) Poor Mary!—Mary 's a strange woman.

MARTHA. (*To* RHODA.) Your mother was the same way, Rhody. The whole Beardsley tribe for that matter. But Mary was the worst. It begun with Mary as soon as her brother Seth got drowned.

BEELER. (*Looks up, angry.*) None of that, Sis!

MARTHA. I guess my tongue 's my own.

BEELER. No, it ain't. I won't have any more of that talk around me, do you hear? I put my foot down a year ago.

MARTHA. (*Points to his foot derisively.*) It 's big enough and ugly enough, Heaven knows, but you can put it down as hard as you like, it won't keep a man's sperrit in his grave—not when he 's a mind to come out!

BEELER. (*Astonished.*) Martha Beeler!

MARTHA. That 's my name.

(*She flounces out into the kitchen, covering her retreat with her last speech.*)

BEELER. (*Looking after her.*) My kingdom! Martha! I thought she had some horse sense left.

RHODA. (*Slowly, as she finishes with the lamp.*) Uncle, it 's hard to live side by side with Aunt Mary and not—

BEELER. (*In angry challenge.*) And not what?

RHODA. And not believe there 's something more in these matters than "horse sense" will account for.

BEELER. (*Hotly, as if a sore point has been touched upon.*) There 's nothing more than science will account for. (*He points to a shelf of books.*) You can read it up any day you like. Read that book yonder, chapter called Hallucinations. Pathological, that 's what it is, pathological.

RHODA. What does that mean? (BEELER *taps his forehead significantly.*) Uncle, you know that 's not true!

BEELER. (*Growls to himself.*) Pathological, up and down.

(RHODA *replaces the lamp on the mantel.* MARTHA *opens the kitchen door and calls in.*)

MARTHA. Here 's Uncle Abe!

BEELER. Uncle Abe? Thought he was a goner.

(UNCLE ABE *enters. He is an old negro, with gray hair and thin, gray beard. He is somewhat bowed, and carries a stick, but he is not decrepit. His clothes are spattered with mud.* MARTHA *enters with him; she is stirring something in a bowl, and during the following continues to do so, though more and more interruptedly and absent-mindedly.*)

BEELER. Hello, Uncle Abe.

UNCLE ABE. Good-mawnin', Mista Beeler.

BEELER. Where 've you been all winter? Thought you 'd gone up Salt River.

UNCLE ABE. (*Shakes his head reassuringly.*) Ain' nevah goin' up no Salt River, yo' Uncle Abe ain't.

BEELER. (*Indicating* RHODA.) Make you acquainted with my wife's niece, Miss Williams.

(UNCLE ABE *bows.*)

RHODA. (*Pushing forward a chair.*) Sit down, Uncle. I don't see how you found your way in this dreadful fog.

UNCLE ABE. Fawg don' matta' nothin' to me, honey. Don' mean nothin' 'tall. (*He speaks with exaltation and restrained excitement.*) Yo' ol' Uncle keeps on tellin' 'em, dis hyah fawg an' darkness don' mean nothin' 'tall!

(RHODA *and* MARTHA *look at him puzzled.* BEELER, *busy over his harness, has not been struck by the old negro's words.*)

BEELER. How 's the ginseng crop this year?

UNCLE ABE. They ain' no mo' gimsing!

BEELER. No more ginseng? What do you mean?

UNCLE ABE. De good Lawd, he ain' goin' fool roun' no mo' wif no gimsing!

BEELER. (*Amused.*) Why, I thought your ginseng bitters was His main holt.

UNCLE ABE. (*With a touch of regret.*) Use to be, Mars' Beeler. It shore use to be.—Yes, sah. Bless de Lawd! (*Shakes his head in reminiscence.*) He sartinly did set sto' by them thah bitters.

BEELER. (*With lazy amusement.*) So the Lord 's gone back on ginseng now, has He?

UNCLE ABE. Yes, sah.

BEELER. What makes you think so?

UNCLE ABE. (*Solemnly.*) Roots all kill by de fros'! (*His manner grows more and more mysterious; he half closes his eyes, as he goes on in a strange, mounting singsong.*) Knowed it more'n a monf ago, fo' dis hyah blin' worl' lef' de

plough in de ploughshare an' de ungroun' wheat betwixen de millstones, and went a-follerin' aftah dis hyah new star outen de Eas', like a bride follerin' aftah de bridegroom!

(MARTHA *taps her forehead significantly, and goes back to her batter.*)

BEELER. New star, Uncle? Tell us about it. Sounds interesting.

UNCLE ABE. (*Stares at each of them in turn.*) Ain' you-all heerd?

BEELER. You've got the advantage of us.

UNCLE ABE. Ain' you-all heerd 'bout de Healer?

BEELER. Healer? What kind of a healer?

UNCLE ABE. (*With mounting indignation at* BEELER'S *tone.*) De Bible kin', dat 's what kin'! De kin' what makes de lame fer to walk, and de blin' fer to see, an' de daid fer to riz up outen their daid col' graves. That 's what kin'! Mean to say you-all ain' heerd nothin' 'bout him, you po' chillun o' dawkness?

(MARTHA *and* BEELER *look at each other in amazement.* RHODA *sits looking at the old negro, white and tense with excitement.*)

BEELER. Nope. (*Recollecting.*) Hold on!

MARTHA. (*To* BEELER.) Don't you remember, in the papers, two or three weeks ago? Where was it? Somewheres out West.

BEELER. Believe I did read some such goin's-on. Don't pay much attention to such nonsense.

UNCLE ABE. (*Solemn and threatening.*) Tek keer, Mistah Beeler! Tek keer what you say 'fore dese here cloudy witnesses. Don' you go cuttin' yo'self off from de Kingdom. Nor you, Mis' Martha, nor you, honey. Don' ye do it! It 's a-comin'. Yo' ol' Uncle Abe he 's seen and heerd.

RHODA. Tell us quickly what you mean!

UNCLE ABE. Mean jes' what I says, honey. Night fo' last, de Healer, he come, like 's if he jes' plum' drop from de sky. (*More mysteriously.*) An' whar 's he gone to? You listen to yo' ol' Uncle Abe a-tellin' you. He ain' gone nowhars! He 's jes' meechin' roun' in de fawg, a-waitin' fer de Lawd to call folks. En He 's a-callin' 'em! He 's a-callin' 'em by tens an' by hundreds. Town 's full a'ready, honey. Main Street look jes' lak a fiel' hospital, down Souf durin' de wah!

MARTHA. (*Meeting* BEELER'S *astonished look.*) What did I tell you? Maybe you 'll listen to *me* next time.

RHODA. (*To* UNCLE ABE, *in a low, agitated voice.*) This man you call the Healer—is he alone?

UNCLE ABE. No, honey; folks says he don' nevah go nowheres by hisse'f. Always got that thah young man wif 'im what he raise from de daid.

BEELER. (*Rises, with a shrug.*) Good evening! (*He crosses to the portraits of Darwin and Spencer.*) You made quite a stir in your time, did n't you? Well, it 's all up with you!

MARTHA. (*In a voice strident with nervousness.*) Raised from the dead?

UNCLE ABE. That 's what they says, Mis' Martha. Folks calls 'im Laz'rus in ref'ence to de Bible chil' what riz up jes' same way lak', outen de daid col' tomb.

(*The Indian boy enters from the kitchen, his shoes and trousers spattered with mud.* UNCLE ABE *looks at him, then at the others, and whispers to* RHODA. MARTHA *bustles forward, hiding her agitation in scolding speech.*)

MARTHA. Well, did you get my coffee and my sal-soda?

(LAZARUS *points, without speaking, to the kitchen.*)

BEELER. (*To* MARTHA.) Did you send him to the store?

MARTHA. Yes, I did send him to the store. If I had my way, I 'd send him—further.

(*The boy hesitates, then goes stolidly out by the stair door.* UNCLE ABE *lifts his arm ecstatically.*)

UNCLE ABE. That 's him! I tell ye that 's the chil' what 's said "Howdy" to the daid folks down yonder. I 'se seen 'im in my dreams, an' now I 'se seen 'im wif dese hyah two eyes.—O Lawd, bless dis hyah house o' grace!

BEELER. I guess it 's about time that fellow come out and exploded some of this tomfoolery.

(*He starts towards his wife's room.*)

RHODA. (*Stopping him.*) Please don't.

BEELER. (*Peevishly.*) There 's got to be an end to this hoodoo business in my house.

(ANNIE *enters from the kitchen, dabbled with dye. She holds two colored eggs in her hands.*)

ANNIE. Look! I 've colored two.

MARTHA. Good gracious, child. What a mess!

ANNIE. Pa! Play crack with me! Just once, to see how it goes.

BEELER. Go in and ask your mother if she 'll let you.

(ANNIE, *her eggs in her apron, opens the hall door. About to pass out, she stops, drops the eggs with a scream, and runs back, gazing towards the hall as she takes refuge behind* RHODA'S *skirts.*)

ANNIE. Pa! Auntie! Ma 's walking!

(MRS. BEELER *enters, walking uncertainly, her face full of intense exaltation.* MICHAELIS *comes just behind her, transfigured by spiritual excitement.*)

BEELER AND MARTHA. (*Starting forward.*) Mary!

RHODA. Aunt Mary!

(MRS. BEELER *advances into the room, reaching out her hand to* ANNIE, *who takes it in speechless fright. She bends over and kisses the child's head, then stretches out her other hand to her husband.*)

MRS. BEELER. Mat, I 'm cured! The Lord has heard our prayers, for His saint's sake.

BEELER. Why, Mary, I can't believe this—it 's too—it 's not possible!

MRS. BEELER. (*Looking at* MICHAELIS.) It is written that he who has faith, even as a grain of mustard seed—. I have had faith.

MARTHA. Law, you 've had faith enough any time these five years, Mary. There was something else wanting, 'pears to me.

MRS. BEELER. There was wanting the word of true belief, saying, "Suffer no more! Stoop and drink of the waters of mercy and healing."

(*Outside, the shrill soprano of a woman is heard, taking up a hymn. At the sound* MICHAELIS *goes to the window. He stands rigid, listening to the hymn to the end of the verse, when other voices join in the chorus. The fog has partially cleared.*

MICHAELIS. (*Turning slowly to* RHODA.) Who are they?

RHODA. Sick people.

MICHAELIS. How did they find out I was here?

RHODA. It was known you were somewhere near.—They have been gathering for days.—They saw the boy, just now, in the village.

MRS. BEELER. (*Comes a step or two nearer* MICHAELIS.) Your great hour is at hand!

(*He looks distractedly about. The light has faded from his face, giving place to strong nervous agitation, resembling fear. He speaks as if to himself.*)

MICHAELIS. My hour!—My hour!—And I —and I—!

(*He puts his hand over his eyes, as if to shut out some vision of dread.*)

MRS. BEELER. You will not fail them? You cannot fail them now.

(MICHAELIS *looks at* MRS. BEELER, *then for a long time at* RHODA. *He gathers himself together, and gazes steadfastly before him, as at some unseen presence.*)

MICHAELIS. No.—I have waited so long. I have had such deep assurances.—I must not fail. I must not fail.

ACT SECOND.

It is late afternoon of the same day. MRS. BEELER *sits in a low chair near the window. She has ceased reading the Testament, which lies open in her lap.* UNCLE ABE *sits on the floor with* ANNIE. *They are playing with building blocks, piling up and tearing down various ambitious structures.*

(RHODA *enters from outside, with hat and cloak, carrying a large bunch of Easter lilies.*)

RHODA. (*Kissing her aunt.*) Still sitting up! You 're not strong enough yet to do this. See, I 've brought you some Easter lilies. (*She hands one to* MRS. BEELER. *As she takes off her things, she sees the old negro gazing at her.*) Well, Uncle Abe?

UNCLE ABE. I 's awake an' a-watchin', honey!

(*He turns again to the child, shaking his head as at some unspoken thought, while* RHODA *arranges the flowers in a vase.*)

MRS. BEELER. Rhoda!

RHODA. Yes, Aunt Mary?

MRS. BEELER. Come here. (RHODA *approaches.* MRS. BEELER *speaks low, with suppressed excitement.*) What is the news, outside?

RHODA. You must n't excite yourself. You must keep your strength.

MRS. BEELER. I shall be strong enough.—

Are the people still gathering from the town?

RHODA. Yes, and they keep coming in from other places.

MRS. BEELER. Are there many of them?

RHODA. Many! Many! It's as if the whole world knew.

MRS. BEELER. The more there are, the greater will be the witness.—(*Pause.*) When do you think he will go out to them?

RHODA. They believe he is waiting for Easter morning.

(MARTHA *enters from kitchen, with bonnet and shawl on, and a large basket in her hand.*)

MARTHA. Mary, you'd ought to be abed. You're tempting Providence. (*She takes off her bonnet and shawl, and deposits the basket.*) I saw your doctor down in the village, and he allowed he'd come up to see you this afternoon. He was all on end about your bein' able to walk.

RHODA. I did n't know till to-day you had a doctor.

MRS. BEELER. Yes. He's a young man who's just come here to build up a practice.

MARTHA. (*To* RHODA.) You better finish packin' the basket. There's a lot o' hungry mouths to feed out yonder.

(*Exit by hall door.* RHODA *continues the preparation of the basket, taking articles from the cupboard and packing them.* ANNIE *has climbed on a chair by the picture of Pan and the Pilgrim. She points at the figure of Pan.*)

ANNIE. Uncle Abe, tell me who that is.

UNCLE ABE. (*Glancing at* MRS. BEELER *and* RHODA.) H'sh!

ANNIE. What's he doing up there in the bushes, blowing on that funny whistle?

UNCLE ABE. Look hyah, chil', you jus' wastin' my time. I got frough wif dis hyah fool pictuh long 'go!

(*He tries to draw her away; she resists.*)

ANNIE. (*Petulantly.*) Uncle Abe! Who is it?

UNCLE ABE. (*Whispers, makes big eyes.*) That thah's Ole Nick, that's who that thah is! That thah's de Black Man!

(ANNIE, *terror-stricken, jumps down and retreats to her mother's chair.* MRS. BEELER *rouses from her revery and strokes her child's head.*)

MRS. BEELER. Oh, my child, how happy you are to see this while you are so young! You will never forget, will you, dear?

ANNIE. (*Fidgeting.*) Forget what?

MRS. BEELER. Tell me that whatever happens to you in the world, you won't forget that once, when you were a little girl, you saw the heavens standing open, and felt that God was very near, and full of pity for His children.

ANNIE. I don't know what you're talking about! I can't hardly breathe the way people are in this house.

MRS BEELER. You will understand, some day, what wonderful things your childish eyes looked on.

(ANNIE *retreats to* UNCLE ABE, *who bends over the child and whispers in her ear. She grows amused, and begins to sway as to a tune, then chants.*)

ANNIE.

"Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Ring dem charmin' bells."

(*As she finishes the rhyme she runs out into the hall.* MRS. BEELER *begins again to read her Testament. The old negro approaches* MRS. BEELER *and* RHODA, *and speaks mysteriously.*)

UNCLE ABE. That thah chil' she's talkin' sense. They's sumpin' ain't right about dis hyah house.

MRS. BEELER. Not right? What do you mean?

UNCLE ABE. (*Shakes his head dubiously.*) Dunno, Mis' Beeler. I's jes' a ole fool colored pusson, been waitin' fer de great day what de 'Postle done promise. En hyah 's de great day 'bout to dawn, an' de Lawd's Chosen 'bout to show Hisse'f in clouds o' glory 'fore de worl', an' lo 'n' behol'—(*He leans closer and whispers.*) de Lawd's Chosen One, he's done got a spell on 'im!

MRS. BEELER. (*Shocked and startled.*) Uncle Abe!

UNCLE ABE. (*Pointing at the Pan and the Pilgrim.*) Why do you keep that thah pictuh nail up thah fur?

MRS. BEELER. My husband likes it.

UNCLE ABE. Mighty funny kin' o' man, like to hev de Black Man lookin' pop-eyed at folks all day an' all night, puttin' de spell on folks!

MRS. BEELER. That 's not the Black Man.

UNCLE ABE. That 's him, shore 's yo' born! Jes' what he looks like. I seen 'im, more 'n once.

RHODA. Seen the Black Man, Uncle?

UNCLE ABE. Yais, ma'am. I 's spied 'im, sittin' in de paw-paw bushes in de springtime, when de snakes a-runnin', an' de jays a-hollerin', an de crick a-talkin' sassy to hisse'f. (*He leans nearer, more mysteriously.*) En what you s'pose I heerd him whis'lin', for all de worl' lak dem scan'lous bluejays? (*Chants in a high, trilling voice.*) "Chillun, chillun, they ain' no Gawd, they ain' no sin nor no jedgment, they 's jes' springtime an' happy days, and folks carryin' on. Whar 's yo' lil gal, Abe Johnson? Whar 's yo' lil sweet-heart gal?" An' me on'y got religion wintah befo', peekin' roun' pie-eyed, skeered good. En fo' you could say "De Lawd 's my Shepherd," kerchunk goes de Black Man in de mud-puddle, change' into a big green bull-frog!

MRS. BEELER. You just imagined all that.

UNCLE ABE. (*Indignant.*) Jes' 'magine! Don' I know de Devil when I sees him, near 'nough to say "Howdy"?

MRS. BEELER. There is n't any Devil.

UNCLE ABE. (*Astounded.*) Ain't no Devil?

MRS. BEELER. No.

(UNCLE ABE *goes, with puzzled head-shakings, towards the kitchen door. He stops to smell the Easter lilies, then raises his head and looks at her again, with puzzled scrutiny.*)

UNCLE ABE. Mis' Beelah, did I understan' you to say—they ain'—no Devil?

MRS. BEELER. (*Touching her breast.*) Only here, Uncle Abe. (*The old negro stares at her and* RHODA, *and goes into the kitchen, feeling his own breast and shaking his head dubiously.* MRS. BEELER *looks at the picture.*) Do you think your Uncle Mat would mind if we took that picture down? (RHODA *unpins the picture from the wall, rolls it up, and lays it on the bookshelf. Her aunt goes on, hesitatingly.*) Do you know, Rhoda, I have sometimes thought—You won't be hurt?

RHODA. No.

MRS. BEELER. I—I know what that old negro says is all foolishness, but—there *is* something the matter with Mr. Michaelis. Have you noticed?

RHODA. (*Avoiding her aunt's gaze.*) Yes.

MRS. BEELER. Just when his great work is about to begin!—What do you think it can be?

RHODA. How should I know, Aunt Mary?

MRS. BEELER. I thought maybe—Rhoda, I have seen him look at you so strangely! Like—like the Pilgrim in the picture, when he hears that heathen creature playing on the pipe.—You are such a wild creature, or you used to be.

(RHODA *comes to her aunt and stands a moment in silence.*)

RHODA. Auntie.

MRS. BEELER. Yes?

RHODA. I think I ought to go away.

MRS. BEELER. (*Astonished.*) Go away? Why?

RHODA. So as not to—hinder him.

MRS. BEELER. (*Caressing her.*) There, you have taken what I said too seriously. It was only a sick woman's imagination.

RHODA. No, it was the truth. You see it, though you try not to. Even Uncle Abe sees it. Just when Mr. Michaelis most needs his strength, weakness has come upon him.

MRS. BEELER. You mean—? (*She hesitates.*) You mean—because of you?—Rhoda, look at me. (RHODA *avoids her aunt's gaze;* MRS. BEELER *draws down the girl's face and gazes at it.*) Is there anything—that I don't know—between you and him?

RHODA. I—I must go away.—I ought to have gone before.

MRS. BEELER. My child, this—this troubles me very much. He is different from other men, and you—and you—

RHODA. (*With passion.*) Say it, say it! What am I?

MRS. BEELER. Don't be hurt, Rhoda, but—you have a wild nature. You are like your father. I remember when he used to drive over to see sister Jane, with his keen face and eagle eyes, behind his span of wild colts, I used to tremble for my gentle sister. You are just like him, or you used to be. (RHODA *breaks away from her aunt, and takes her hat and cloak.* MRS. BEELER *rises with perturbation, and crosses to detain her.*) What are you going to do?

RHODA. I am going away—I *must* go away.

(MARTHA *enters from the hall.*)

MRS. BEELER. (*Speaks lower.*) Promise me you won't! Promise me!

MARTHA. To look at that, now! Seein'

you on your feet, Mary, gives me a new start every time.

MRS. BEELER. (*To* RHODA.) You promise?

(RHODA *bows her head as in assent.*)

MARTHA. Doctor's in the parlor. Shall I bring him in here?

MRS. BEELER. No. I think I will rest awhile. He can come to my room. (*She walks unsteadily. The others try to help her, but she motions them back.*) No. It's so good to feel that I can walk alone!

MARTHA. It does beat all!

MRS. BEELER. I'll just lie down on the couch. I want to go out, before dark, and speak to the people.

(MR. BEELER *enters from the kitchen and crosses to help his wife. The others give place to him.*)

Oh, Mat, our good days are coming back! I shall be strong and well for you again.

BEELER. Yes, Mary. There will be nothing to separate us any more.

MRS. BEELER. (*Points at his books.*) Not even—them? (*He goes to the alcove, takes the books from the shelf, raises the lid of the window-seat, and throws them in.* MRS. BEELER *points to the pictures of Darwin and Spencer.*) Nor them? (*He unpins the pictures, lays them upon the heap of books, and returns to her.*) You don't know how happy that makes me!

(*They go out by the hall door.* MARTHA, *as she lowers the lid of the window-seat, points derisively at the heap.*)

MARTHA. That's a good riddance of bad rubbish! (*She comes to the table and continues packing the basket.*) You'd better help me with this basket. Them folks will starve to death, if the neighborhood round don't give 'em a bite to eat. (RHODA *fetches other articles from the cupboard.*) I'd like to know what they think we are made of, with butter at twenty-five cents a pound and flour worth its weight in diamonds!

RHODA. All the neighbors are helping, and none of them with our cause for thankfulness.

MARTHA. That's no sign you should go plasterin' on that butter like you was a bricklayer tryin' to bust the contractor!

(*She takes the bread from* RHODA *and scrapes the butter thin.*)

RHODA. (*As the clock strikes five.*) It's time for Aunt Mary to have her tea. Shall I make it?

MARTHA. You make it! Not unless you want to lay her flat on her back again!

(*As she flounces out,* ANNIE *enters from the hall. She points with one hand at the retreating Martha, with the other toward her mother's room.*)

ANNIE. (*Sings with sly emphasis.*)

"Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Mary an' a' Martha 's jus' gone along,
Ring dem charmin' bells."

(*She climbs upon a chair by the table, and fingers the contents of basket as she sings.*)

RHODA. What 's got into you, little imp?

ANNIE. (*Brazenly.*) I've been peeping through mamma's keyhole.

RHODA. That 's not nice.

ANNIE. I know it, but the minister's in there and Dr. Littlefield.

RHODA. (*Startled.*) Who?

ANNIE. You know, mamma's doctor.—Oh, he's never come since you've been here.

RHODA. (*In a changed voice, as she takes the child by the shoulders.*) What does he look like?

ANNIE. Don't, you're hurting me!—He's too red in the face, and looks kind of—insulting—and he wears the most *beautiful* neckties, and— (*Exhausted by her efforts at description.*) Oh, I don't know! (*She sings as she climbs down, and goes out by the kitchen door.*)

"Free grace, undyin' love,
Free grace, undyin' love,
Free grace, undyin' love,
Ring dem lovely bells."

(DR. LITTLEFIELD *enters from* MRS. BEELER'S *room. He speaks back to* BEELER *on the threshold.*)

LITTLEFIELD. Don't bother! I'll find it. (*Looking for something, he approaches* RHODA, *who has her back turned.*) Beg pardon. Have you seen a pocket thermometer I left here? (*She faces him. He starts back in surprise.*) Bless my soul and body! Rhoda Williams! (*He closes the hall door, returns to her, and stands somewhat disconcerted.*) Here of all places!

RHODA. Mrs. Beeler is my aunt.

LITTLEFIELD. Well, well! The world is small.—Been here long?

RHODA. Only a month.

LITTLEFIELD. And before that?

RHODA. It's a long story. Besides, you would n't understand.

LITTLEFIELD. You might let me try. What in the world have you been doing all this time?

RHODA. I have been searching for something.

LITTLEFIELD. What was it?

RHODA. My own lost self. My own—lost soul.

LITTLEFIELD. (*Amused at her solemnity.*) You're a queer bundle of goods. Always were. Head full of solemn notions about life, and at the same time, when it came to a lark,—Oh, I'm no grandmother, but when you got on your high horse—well!

(*He waves his hands expressively.*)

RHODA. (*Bursts out.*) The great town, the people, the noise, and the lights—after seventeen years of life on a dead prairie, where I'd hardly heard a laugh or seen a happy face!—All the same, the prairie had me still.

LITTLEFIELD. You don't mean you went back to the farm?

RHODA. I mean that the years I'd spent out there in that endless stretch of earth and sky—. (*She breaks off, with a weary gesture.*) There's no use going into that. You would n't understand.

LITTLEFIELD. No, I walk on simple shoe leather and eat mere victuals.—Just the same, it was n't square of you to clear out that way—vanish into air without a word or a sign.

RHODA. (*Looking at him steadily.*) You know very well why I went.

LITTLEFIELD. (*Returning her gaze, unabashed, chants with meaning and relish.*)

"Hey diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon."

(RHODA *takes up the basket and goes toward the outer door. He intercepts her.*)

RHODA. Let me pass.

LITTLEFIELD. You're not taking part in this camp-meeting enthusiasm, are you?

RHODA. Yes.

(*As he stares at her, his astonishment changes to amusement; he chuckles to himself, then bursts out laughing, as in humorous reminiscence.*)

LITTLEFIELD. Bless my soul! And to think that only a couple of little years ago—Oh, *bless* my soul!

(*The stair door opens.* MICHAELIS *appears. His face is flushed, his hair disordered, and his whole person expresses a feverish and precarious exaltation.*)

MICHAELIS. (*Looks at* LITTLEFIELD *with vague query, then at* RHODA.) Excuse me, I am very thirsty. I came down for a glass of water.

(RHODA *goes to the kitchen door, where she turns. The doctor puts on a pair of nose-glasses and scans* MICHAELIS *with interest. He holds out his hand, which* MICHAELIS *takes.*)

LITTLEFIELD. We ought to know each other. We're colleagues, in a way.

MICHAELIS. Colleagues?

LITTLEFIELD. In a way, yes. I'm a practising physician. (*Exit* RHODA.) You seem to have the call on us professionals, to judge by the number of your clients out yonder. (*He points out of the window.*) To say nothing of Exhibit One!

(*He points to the hall door.*)

MICHAELIS. (*Vaguely.*) I—I don't know that I— (RHODA *enters from the kitchen, with water, which he takes.*) Thank you.

(*He drinks thirstily.* MR. BEELER *appears in the hall door; he looks at the group, taken aback.*)

BEELER. Oh—!

LITTLEFIELD. I stopped to chat with your niece. She and I happen to be old acquaintances.

BEELER. You don't say?—Would you mind coming in here for a minute?

LITTLEFIELD. (*Following him out.*) What's up?

BEELER. My wife's got it in her head that she's called upon to—

(*Door closes.* MICHAELIS, *who has followed* LITTLEFIELD *with his eyes, sets down the glass, and turns slowly to* RHODA.)

MICHAELIS. Who is that?

RHODA. My aunt's doctor.

MICHAELIS. You know him well?

RHODA. Yes.—No.

MICHAELIS. What does that mean?

RHODA. I have n't seen him for nearly two years.—I can't remember much about the person I was, two years ago.

MICHAELIS. Yes! Yes! I understand.

(*He turns away, lifting his hands, speak-*

ing half to himself.) That these lives of ours should be poured like a jelly, from one mould into another, until God Himself cannot remember what they were two years ago, or two hours ago!

RHODA. Why do you say that? (*He does not answer, but walks nervously about.* RHODA, *watching him, speaks, after a silence.*) Last month—out West—were there many people there?

MICHAELIS. No.—Two or three.

RHODA. The papers said—

MICHAELIS. When the crowd began to gather, I—went away.

RHODA. Why?

MICHAELIS. My time had not come.

(*He has stopped before the map and stands gazing at it.*)

RHODA. Has it come now? (*She comes closer.*) —Has your time come now?

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. How do you know?

MICHAELIS. (*Points at the map.*) It is written there!

RHODA. How do you mean, written there?

MICHAELIS. Can't you see it?

RHODA. I see the map, nothing more.

MICHAELIS. (*Points again, gazing fixedly.*) It seems to me to be written in fire.

RHODA. What seems written?

MICHAELIS. What I have been doing, all these five years.

RHODA. Since your work began?

MICHAELIS. It has never begun. Many times I have thought, "Now," and some man or woman has risen up healed, and looked at me with eyes of prophecy. But a Voice would cry, "On, on!" and I would go forward, driven by a force and a will not my own.—I did n't know what it all meant, but I know now. (*He points at the map, his manner transformed with excitement and exaltation.*) It is written there. It is written in letters of fire. My eyes are opened, and I see!

RHODA. (*Following his gaze, then looking at him again, awed and bewildered.*) What is it that you see?

MICHAELIS. The cross!

RHODA. I—I don't understand.

MICHAELIS. All those places where the hand was lifted for a moment, and the power flowed into me— (*He places his finger at various points on the map; these points lie in two transverse lines, between the Mississippi and the Pacific; one line runs roughly north and south, the other east and west.*) Look! There was such a place, and there another, and there, and there. And there was one, and there, and there.—Do you see?

RHODA. I see.—It makes a kind of cross.

MICHAELIS. You see it, too! And do you see what it means—this sign that my feet have marked across the length and breadth of a continent? (*He begins again to pace the room.*) —And that crowd of stricken souls out yonder, raised up as by miracle, their broken bodies crying to be healed,—do you see what they mean?

RHODA. (*In a steady voice.*) They mean what my aunt said this morning. They mean that your great hour has come.

MICHAELIS. My hour! my hour! (*He comes nearer, and speaks in a quieter tone.*) I knew a young Indian once, a Hopi boy, who made songs and sang them to his people. One evening we sat on the roof of the chief's house and asked him to sing. He shook his head, and went away in the starlight. The next morning, I found him among the rocks under the mesa, with an empty bottle by his side.—He never sang again! Drunkenness had taken him. He never sang again, or made another verse.

RHODA. What has that to do with you? It 's not—? You don't mean that you—?

MICHAELIS. No. There is a stronger drink for such as I am!

RHODA. (*Forcing herself to go on.*) What—"stronger drink"?

MICHAELIS. (*Wildly.*) The wine of this world! The wine-bowl that crowns the feasting table of the children of this world.

RHODA. What do you mean by—the wine of this world?

MICHAELIS. You know that! Every woman knows. (*He points out of the window, at the sky flushed with sunset color.*) Out there, at this moment, in city and country, souls, thousands upon thousands of souls, are dashing in pieces the cup that holds the wine of heaven, the wine of God's shed blood, and lifting the cups of passion and of love, that crown the feasting table of the children of this earth! Look! The very sky is blood-red with the lifted cups. And we two are in the midst of them. Listen! what I sing there, on the hills of light in the sunset: "Oh, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of my beloved!" (*A song rises outside, loud and near at hand*—MICHAELIS *listens, his ex-*

pression gradually changing from passionate excitement to brooding distress. Vaguely, as the music grows fainter and dies away.) I—we were saying—. (*He grasps her arm in nervous apprehension.*) For God's sake, tell me.—Are there many people—waiting—out there?

RHODA. Hundreds, if not thousands.

MICHAELIS. (*Walks about.*) Thousands. —Thousands of thousands!— (*He stops beside her.*) You won't leave me alone?

RHODA. (*Hesitates, then speaks with decision.*) No.

MICHAELIS. (*Continuing his walk.*) Thousands of thousands!

(*The hall door opens,* DR. LITTLEFIELD *and a Clergyman, the* REV. JOHN CULPEPPER, *enter. The latter stares inquiringly from* MICHAELIS *to the* DOCTOR, *who nods affirmatively, and adjusts his glasses.*)

CULPEPPER. (*Mutters to* LITTLEFIELD.) Nonsense! Sacrilegious nonsense!

LITTLEFIELD. (*Same tone.*) I've done my best.

(*Behind them comes* MRS. BEELER, *supported by her Husband. At the same moment* MARTHA *enters from the kitchen, with tea;* UNCLE ABE *and* ANNIE *follow.*)

BEELER. (*On the threshold.*) Mary, take another minute to consider.

(MRS. BEELER, *as if without hearing this protest, gazes at* MICHAELIS, *and advances into the room with a gesture of the arms which causes her supporter to loosen his hold, though he follows slightly behind, to render aid if necessary.*)

MRS. BEELER. (*To* MICHAELIS.) Tell me that I may go out, and stand before them for a testimony!

LITTLEFIELD. As a physician, I must formally protest.

CULPEPPER. And I as a minister of the Gospel.

MRS. BEELER. (*To* MICHAELIS, *with a nervous, despairing gesture.*) Speak to them! Explain to them! I am too weak.

(*There is a sound of excited voices outside, near at hand, then a sudden trample of footsteps at the entrance door. As* BEELER *goes hurriedly to the door it bursts open and a young woman with a baby in her arms crowds past him, and stands looking wildly about the room.*)

BEELER. (*As he forces the others back.*) You can't come in here, my friends! Stand back!

(*The woman gazes from one to another of the men. The old negro points at* MICHAELIS. *She advances to him, holding out the child.*)

MOTHER. Don't let my baby die! For Christ's sake, don't let him die!

(*He examines the child's face, touches the mother's head tenderly, and signs to* RHODA *to take them into the inner room.*)

MICHAELIS. Take her with you, I will come.

RHODA. (*With gentle urgency, to the woman.*) Come with me.

(*She leads the woman out through the hall door.*)

MICHAELIS. (*To* MRS. BEELER, *as he points outside.*) Tell them to wait until to-morrow at sunrise. (MR. *and* MRS. BEELER *move toward the entrance door; some of the others start after, some linger, curious to know what will happen to the child.* MICHAELIS *turns upon them with a commanding gesture.*) Go, all of you!

(*The room is cleared except for* LITTLEFIELD, *who goes last, stops in the doorway, closes the door, and approaches* MICHAELIS. *He speaks in a friendly and reasonable tone.*)

LITTLEFIELD. You're on the wrong track, my friend.

MICHAELIS. I asked you to go.

LITTLEFIELD. I heard you. I want to say a word or two first. For your own sake and for that woman's sake, you'd better listen. You can't do anything for her baby.

MICHAELIS. Is that for you to say?

LITTLEFIELD. Yes, sir! It is most decidedly for me to say.

MICHAELIS. By what authority?

LITTLEFIELD. By the authority of medical knowledge.—You are a very remarkable man, with a very remarkable gift. In your own field, I take off my hat to you. If you knew yourself as science knows you, you might make the greatest doctor living. Your handling of Mrs. Beeler's case was masterly. But—come right down to it—*you* didn't work the cure.

MICHAELIS. I know that.

LITTLEFIELD. Who do you think did?

MICHAELIS. (*Raising his hands.*) He whom I serve, and whom you blaspheme!

LITTLEFIELD. No, sir! He whom *I* serve,

and whom *you* blaspheme—Nature. Or rather, Mrs. Beeler did it herself.

MICHAELIS. Herself?

LITTLEFIELD. You gave her a jog, so to speak, here, or here, (*Touches his brain and heart.*) and she did the rest. But you can't do the same to everybody. Above all, you can't do it to a baby in arms. There's nothing either here or here, (*Touches brain and heart.*) to get hold of. I'm a modest man, and as I say, in your own field you're a wonder. But in a case like this one— (*He points to the hall door.*) I'm worth a million of you.

MICHAELIS. (*Moves as if to give place to him, with a challenging gesture toward the door.*) Try!

LITTLEFIELD. (*Shrugs.*) Not much! The woman would n't listen to me. And if she did, and I failed—oh, I'm no miracle worker!—they'd make short work of me, out there. (*He points out and adds significantly.*) They're in no mood for failures, out there. (MICHAELIS'S *gaze, as if in spite of himself, goes to the window. He rests his hand on the table, to stop its trembling.* LITTLEFIELD *goes on, watching him with interest.*) Nervously speaking, you are a high power machine. The dynamo that runs you is what is called "faith," "religious inspiration," or what-not. It's a dynamo which nowadays easily gets out of order. Well, my friend, as a doctor, I warn you that your little dynamo is out of order.—In other words, you've lost your grip. You're in a funk.

(RHODA *opens the hall door and looks anxiously at the two.* MICHAELIS *approaches her with averted eyes. As he is about to pass out, she speaks timidly.*)

RHODA. Do you want me?

MICHAELIS. (*In a toneless voice.*) No.

(*She watches him until the inner door shuts. She and* LITTLEFIELD *confront each other in silence for a moment across the width of the room.*)

RHODA. (*Forcing herself to speak calmly.*) Please go.

LITTLEFIELD. (*Drops his professional tone for one of cynical badinage.*) You make up well as one of the Wise Virgins, whose lamps are trimmed and burning for the bridegroom to pass by. I hope that personage won't disappoint you, nor the several hundred others, out yonder, whose lamps are trimmed and burning.

(*The outer door opens.* MRS. BEELER *enters, supported by her husband, and accompanied by* MARTHA *and the* REV. CULPEPPER, *with* UNCLE ABE *following in the rear.* RHODA *hastens to her aunt's side.*)

MRS. BEELER. Ah, Rhoda, I wish you had been out there with me. Such beautiful human faces! Such poor, suffering, believing human faces, lit up by such a wonderful new hope! (*She turns to the minister.*) Was n't it a wonderful thing to see?

CULPEPPER. It is wonderful to see human nature so credulous. And to me, very painful.

MRS. BEELER. To-morrow you will see how right these poor souls are to lift their trust so high.— (*To* RHODA.) Where is he now? (RHODA *points in the direction of her own room.*) How happy that young mother's heart will be to-night!

UNCLE ABE. (*Solemnly.*) Amen!

CULPEPPER. (*In a dry tone.*) We will hope so.

(*They move to the hall door, where* BEELER *resigns his wife to* RHODA. *The two pass out.*

(CULPEPPER, LITTLEFIELD, *and* BEELER *remain. During the following conversation,* MARTHA *lights the lamp, after directing* UNCLE ABE, *by a gesture, to take the provision basket into the kitchen. He does so.*)

LITTLEFIELD. (*Pointing through the window.*) They're just laying siege to you, ain't they? I guess they won't let your man give them the slip, this time—even though you do let him run loose.

BEELER. (*With severity.*) You have seen my wife walk alone to-day, the first time in five years.

LITTLEFIELD. I beg your pardon. I understand how you feel about it. (MARTHA *goes out into the kitchen.*) And even if it proves to be only temporary—

BEELER. Temporary!

LITTLEFIELD. Permanent, let us hope. Anyway, it's a very remarkable case. Astonishing. I've only known one just like it—personally, I mean.

BEELER. (*Astounded.*) Just like it?

LITTLEFIELD. Well, pretty much. Happened in Chicago when I was an interne at St. Luke's.

BEELER. Then it's not—there's nothing—peculiar about it?

LITTLEFIELD. Yes, sir-ree! Mighty peculiar!

BEELER. I mean nothing, as you might say, outside nature?

LITTLEFIELD. O, bless you, you can't get outside nature nowadays! (*Moves his hands in a wide circle.*) Tight as a drum, no air-holes.—Devilish queer, though—pardon me, Mr. Culpepper—really amazing, the power of the mind over the body.

CULPEPPER. Would you be good enough to let us hear some of your professional experiences?

LITTLEFIELD. (*Lights a cigarette, as he leans on the edge of the table.*) Don't have to go to professional medicine for cases. They're lying around loose. Why, when I was at Ann Arbor—in a fraternity initiation—we bared a chap's shoulders, showed him a white-hot poker, blindfolded him, told him to stand steady, and—touched him with a piece of ice. A piece of ice, I tell you! What happened? Damned if it—pardon me, Mr. Culpepper—blessed if it didn't *burn* him—carries the scars to this day. Then there was that case in Denver. Ever hear about that? A young girl, nervous patient. Nails driven through the palms of her hands,—tenpenny nails,—under the hypnotic suggestion that she wasn't being hurt. Didn't leave a cicatrice as big as a bee sting! Fact!

BEELER. You think my wife's case is like these?

LITTLEFIELD. Precisely; with religious excitement to help out. (*He points outside.*) They're getting ready for Kingdom-come over it, out yonder, dear Dr. Culpepper.

BEELER. They're worked up enough, if that's all that's needed.

LITTLEFIELD. Worked up! Elijah in a chariot of fire, distributing cure-alls as he mounts to glory. They've got their ascension robes on, especially the niggers.

CULPEPPER. (*With severity.*) I take it you are the late Dr. Martin's successor.

LITTLEFIELD. I have the honor.

CULPEPPER. Old Dr. Martin would never have taken a flippant tone in such a crisis.

LITTLEFIELD. Flippant? By no means! A little light-headed. My profession is attacked. At its very roots, sir.—(*With relish.*) As far as that goes, I'm afraid yours is, too.

CULPEPPER. (*To* BEELER, *ignoring the gibe.*) Am I to understand that you countenance these proceedings?

BEELER. (*Pointing to the invalid chair.*) If your wife had spent five years helpless in that chair, I guess you'd countenance any proceedings that set her on her feet.

CULPEPPER. (*Towers threateningly.*) If your wife is the woman she was, she would rather sit helpless forever beside the Rock of Ages, than dance and flaunt herself in the house of idols!

BEELER. (*With depreciating humor.*) O, I guess she ain't doin' much flauntin' of herself in any house of idols.—You've heard Doctor here say it's all natural enough. Maybe this kind of cure is the coming thing.

LITTLEFIELD. The Brother would drive us doctors into the poorhouse, if he could keep up the pace. And you preachers, too, as far as that goes. If he could keep up the pace! Well—(*Sucks at his cigarette deliberately.*) lucky for us, he *can't* keep it up.

BEELER. Why can't he keep it up?

LITTLEFIELD. Can't stand the strain.—Oh, I haven't seen him operate, but I'm willing to bet his miracles take it out of him!

CULPEPPER. (*Takes his hat and goes toward the outer door.*) Miracles, indeed!

LITTLEFIELD. (*Following.*) Oh, wait for me, Doctor; we're both in the same boat!

BEELER. Hope you gentlemen will come back again to-night, and soon, too. Don't know what'll happen if things go wrong in there.

(*Points towards the hall.*)

LITTLEFIELD. All right—you can count on me—

BEELER. (*To* CULPEPPER.) And you?

CULPEPPER. I seldom shirk my duty.

(BEELER *closes the door after them.*)

(MARTHA *enters from the kitchen, with a pan of dough, which she sets before the fire to raise.*)

BEELER. You keepin' an eye out, Marthy?

MARTHA. Guess your barn'd 'a' been afire, if I hadn't been keepin' an eye out.

BEELER. I warned 'em about fire!

MARTHA. Haymow ketched. If I hadn't been there to put it out, we'd 'a' been without a roof by now.

BEELER. Guess I better go keep an eye out myself.

MARTHA. Guess you had!

(BEELER *goes out by the kitchen.*

(MARTHA takes up mechanically her eternal task of setting things to rights—gathering up ANNIE'S toys and arranging the furniture in more precise order. Meanwhile, RHODA enters from the hall with the mother of the sick child, a frail young woman of nervous type. She clings to RHODA feverishly.)

MOTHER. Don't leave me!

RHODA. You must n't worry. Your baby will get well. (RHODA *sinks in a low easy chair before the fire, and the woman kneels beside her, her face hidden on the chair arm.*) You must keep up your courage and your trust. That will help more than anything.

MOTHER. I 'm afraid!

RHODA. Think of those others out there, who are waiting too, without the glimpse of comfort you 've had.

MOTHER. (*Bursts out.*) I ain't had no comfort! When I heard him pray for my child, I—I don't know—I kept sayin' to myself—"O God, it 's me that 's stretchin' out my hands to you, not him. Don't punish me for his cold words!"

(MARTHA, who has been listening, shakes her head significantly.)

RHODA. Cold words!

MOTHER. Yes, I know it 's wrong. I 'll try to feel different. It 's because I ain't had nothin' to do with religion for so long.—If my baby gets well, I 'll make up for it. I 'll make up for everything.

(The woman rises. RHODA kisses her.)

RHODA. I shall be here if you want me. And I shall—pray for you.

(The mother goes out. Distant singing is heard. MARTHA comes to the mantelpiece with matches, which she arranges in the match tray. She looks at RHODA, who sits with closed eyes.)

MARTHA. Guess you 're about dead beat.

RHODA. I think I never was so tired in my life.

MARTHA. Worry does it, more 'n work. Better try and doze off, Rhody.

(The hall door opens, and ANNIE enters. She comes to MARTHA, and clings nervously to her skirts.)

ANNIE. Aunt Martha! I want to stay with you. You 're the only person in this house that ain't different. What 's the matter with Mamma?

MARTHA. She 's cured, I reckon.

ANNIE. How did she get cured?

MARTHA. You can search me!

ANNIE. Did that man cure her?

MARTHA. That 's what she says, and I don't hear him denyin' it.

ANNIE. (*Whining.*) I don't want her to be cured!

MARTHA. Annie Beeler! Don't want your mother to be cured?

ANNIE. No, I don't. I want her to be like she always has been. She don't seem like my Mamma at all this way. What 's the matter with all those people out there? Why don't we have any supper? (*She bursts out crying and clings feverishly to* MARTHA.) Oh, what 's going to happen to us?

MARTHA. There, Annie, don't cry. (*She looks at* RHODA, *throws a cover over her knees, and draws* ANNIE *away, speaking low.*) Come out in the kitchen, and I 'll give you your supper.

(Exeunt. The singing grows louder and nearer. MICHAELIS *enters from the hall. His hair is dishevelled, his collar open, his manner feverish and distraught. He looks closely at* RHODA, *sees she is sleeping, then paces the floor nervously, gazing out of the window in the direction of the singing. At length he comes to* RHODA *again, and bends over her, studying her face. She starts up, confused and terror-stricken, from her doze.)*

RHODA. What—what is the matter? Oh, you frightened me so! (MICHAELIS *turns away without answering.*) What has happened? Why are you here?

MICHAELIS. You had dropped asleep. You are weary.

RHODA. (*Collecting her thoughts with difficulty.*) I was dreaming—such a strange dream.

MICHAELIS. What did you dream?

RHODA. I thought it was morning; the sun had risen, and—and you were out there, in the midst of the crowd.

MICHAELIS. (*Excitedly.*) Go on! What happened?

RHODA. I—I can't remember the rest.

MICHAELIS. (*Grasps her arm, speaks low.*) You must remember! Did I—succeed?

RHODA. (*Helplessly.*) I—it 's all a blur in my mind.

MICHAELIS. (*Darkly.*) You don't want me to know that, in your dream, I failed.

RHODA. No, no. That is not so. (*Pause. She speaks with hesitation.*) Perhaps

this is not the time. Perhaps you are not ready.

MICHAELIS. What does that matter? *He* is ready.

(*He points at the map.*)

RHODA. (*Gazing at the map, with mystic conviction.*) You will succeed! You must succeed! (*He paces the room. She stops him, pointing toward the hall door.*) How is the child? (*He hesitates. She repeats the words anxiously.*) How is the child? (*He shakes his head gloomily for answer.*) It will get well, I am sure.

MICHAELIS. If it does not, I am judged.

RHODA. Oh, don't say that or think it!

MICHAELIS. I am weighed in the balance and found wanting!

RHODA. You cannot hang the whole issue and meaning of your life upon so slight a thread.

MICHAELIS. The whole issue and meaning of the world hang on threads as slight. If this one is slight. To the mother it is not slight, nor to the God who put into her eyes, as she looked at me, all the doubt and question of the suffering earth.

RHODA. You must remember that it is only a little child. Its mind is not open. You cannot influence it—can you?

MICHAELIS. Once that little life in my hand would have been as clay in the hands of the potter. If I cannot help now, it is because my ministry has been taken from me and given to another, who will be strong where I am weak, and faithful where I am unfaithful.

(*Another song rises outside, distant.*)

RHODA. (*Comes closer to him.*) Tell me this. Speak plainly to me. Is it because of me that your weakness and unfaith have come upon you? Is it because of me?

MICHAELIS. (*Looking at her steadily.*) Yes.—(*He comes nearer.*) Before creation, beyond time, God not yet risen from His sleep, you stand and call to me, and I listen in a dream that I dreamed before Eden.

RHODA. (*Shrinking from him.*) You must not say such things to me.—You must not think of me so.—You must not!

(*He follows her, his passion mounting.*)

MICHAELIS. All my life long I have known you, and fled from you. I have heard you singing on the hills of sleep and have fled from you into the waking day. I have seen you in the spring forest, dancing and throwing your webs of sunlight to snare me; on moonlit mountains, laughing and calling; in the streets of crowded cities, beckoning and disappearing in the crowd—and everywhere I have fled from you, holding above my head the sign of God's power in me, my gift and my mission.—What use? What use? It has crumbled, and I do not care!

RHODA. Oh, don't speak such words, I beseech you. Let me go. This must not, shall not be!

(*She makes another attempt to escape. He presses upon her until she stands at bay.*)

MICHAELIS. You are all that I have feared and shunned and missed on earth, and now I have you, the rest is as nothing. (*He takes her, feebly resisting, into his arms.*) I know a place out there, high in the great mountains. Heaven-piercing walls of stone, a valley of trees and sweet water in the midst—grass and flowers, such flowers as you have never dreamed could grow.—There we will take our happiness. A year—a month—a day—what matter? We will make a lifetime of each hour!

RHODA. (*Yielding to his embrace, whispers.*) Don't talk. Don't think. Only—love me. A little while. A little while.

(*The deep hush of their embrace is broken by a cry from within. The young mother opens the hall door in a distraction of terror and grief.*)

MOTHER. Come here! Come quick!

(MICHAELIS *and* RHODA *draw apart. He stares at the woman, as if not remembering who she is.*) I can't rouse him! My baby's gone. Oh, my God, he's dead!

(*She disappears.* RHODA *follows, drawing* MICHAELIS, *dazed and half resisting, with her. The room remains vacant for a short time, the stage held by distant singing.* BEELER *enters from the kitchen. There is a knock at the outer door, which he opens.* LITTLEFIELD, CULPEPPER, *and* UNCLE ABE *enter.*)

LITTLEFIELD. Your man has n't vamoosed, has he? Uncle Abe here says he saw the Indian boy slipping by in the fog.

BEELER. (*Turns to the negro inquiringly.*) Alone?

UNCLE ABE. (*Mumbles half to himself.*) 'Lone. 'Spec' he was alone. Did n't

even have his own flesh and bones wif 'im!

BEELER. What 's that?

UNCLE ABE. (*Holds up his right hand, which he eyes with superstitious interest.*) Put dis hyar han' right frough him!—Shore 's you 're bo'n. Right plum' frough 'im whar he lives.

CULPEPPER. Mediæval! Absolutely mediæval!

LITTLEFIELD. Not a bit of it. It 's up to date, and a little more, too.

CULPEPPER. I 'm astonished that you take this situation flippantly.

LITTLEFIELD. Not for a minute. My bread and butter are at stake. (*Wickedly.*) Yours too, you know.

(MRS. BEELER *enters, alone, from the hall. She is in a state of vague alarm. Her husband hastens to help her.*)

MRS. BEELER. What is it? What is the matter? I thought I heard—

(*She breaks off, as a murmur of voices rises outside. There is a sound of stumbling and crowding on the outer steps, and violent knocking. The outer door is forced open, and a crowd of excited people is about to pour into the room.* BEELER, *the Doctor, and the Preacher are able to force the crowd back only after several have made an entrance.*)

BEELER. Keep back! You can't come in here.

(*As he pushes them roughly back, excited voices speak together.*)

VOICES IN THE CROWD. Where is he?—They say he 's gone away. We seen his boy makin' for the woods.—Oh, it 's not true! Make him come out.

BEELER. Curse you, keep back, I say!

(RHODA *has entered from the hall, and* MARTHA *from the kitchen. The two women support* MRS. BEELER, *who remains standing, the fear deepening in her face.*)

A VOICE. (*On the outskirts of the crowd.*) Where 's he gone to?

BEELER. He 's here. In the next room. Keep back! Here he comes now.

(MICHAELIS *appears in the hall door. There is a low murmur of excitement, expectation, and awe among the people crowded in the entrance.* BEELER *crosses to help his wife, and the other men step to one side, leaving* MICHAELIS *to confront the crowd alone. Confused, half-whispered exclamations:*)

VOICES IN THE CROWD. Hallelujah! Emmanuel!

A NEGRO. Praise de Lamb.

A WOMAN. (*Above the murmuring voices.*) "He hath risen, and His enemies are scattered."

MICHAELIS. Who said that?

(*A woman, obscurely seen in the crowd, lifts her hands and cries again, this time in a voice ecstatic and piercing.*)

A WOMAN. "The Lord hath risen, and His enemies are scattered!"

MICHAELIS. His enemies are scattered! Year after year I have heard His voice calling me—and year after year I have said, "Show me the way." And He showed me the way. He brought me to this house, and He raised up the believing multitude around me. But in that hour I failed Him, I failed Him. He has smitten me, as His enemies are smitten.—As a whirlwind He has scattered me and taken my strength from me forever. (*He advances into the room, with a gesture backward through the open door.*) In yonder room a child lies dead on its mother's knees, and the mother's eyes follow me with curses. (*At the news of the child's death,* MRS. BEELER *has sunk with a low moan into a chair, where she lies white and motionless.* MICHAELIS *turns to her.*) And here lies one who rose at my call, and was as one risen; but now—(*He breaks off, raises his hand to her, and speaks in a voice of pleading.*) Arise, my sister! (*She makes a feeble gesture of the left hand.*) Rise up once more, I beseech you!

(*She attempts to rise, but falls back helpless.*)

BEELER. (*Bending over her.*) Can't you get up, Mother?

(*She shakes her head.*)

MICHAELIS. (*Turning to the people.*) Despair not, for another will come, and another and yet another, to show you the way. But as for me—(*He sinks down by the table, and gazes before him, muttering in a tragic whisper.*) Broken! Broken! Broken!

ACT THIRD.

The next morning, just before sunrise. Both door and windows are open, and a

light breeze sways the curtains. Outside is a tree-shaded and vine-clad porch, with balustrade, beyond which is a tangle of flowering bushes and fruit trees in bloom. The effect is of a rich warm dawn—a sudden onset of summer weather after a bleak spring.

BEELER, *with* UNCLE ABE *looking on, is busy putting up the pictures which he has taken down in the preceding act.* MARTHA *enters from the hall.*

BEELER. (*To* MARTHA.) Is Mary up?

MARTHA. Yes. Wants to go out on the porch and watch the sun rise, same as she's done every Easter morning since Seth died.

BEELER. Won't hurt her, I reckon, bad off as she is.—A reg'lar old-fashioned, sunshiny, blossomy spring mornin'—summer here with a jump and fine growin' weather. (*Pause.*) All the same, sun might as well stay in China this Easter!

MARTHA. Is that why you're tackin' up them fool pictures again?

BEELER. Yes, ma'am. That's just why. Religion!

MARTHA. You wa' n't so sure yesterday, when you saw your wife stand up on her two dead feet and walk.

BEELER. Well, she ain't walkin' now.

MARTHA. No, she ain't, poor thing.

BEELER. Natural cure, natural relapse. Doctor says the new medical books explain it.

MARTHA. Give it a name, maybe!

BEELER. (*Bursts out petulantly.*) You women don't want things explained, any more'n Abe here! You prefer hocus-pocus. And nothin' will teach you. Take Rhody! Sees Michaelis flunk his job miserable. Sees Mary go down like a woman shot, hands and legs paralyzed again,—Doctor says, for good, this time. And what does the girl do about it? Spends the night out yonder laborin' with them benighted sick folks, tellin' 'em the healer will make good. Lots of makin' good he'll do! (*He points at the ceiling.*) A fine picture of a healer he makes.

MARTHA. (*Looking up.*) Still as a stone! I'd rather have him ragin' round same as yesterday, like a lion with the epizoötic.

BEELER. He's a dead one. Rhody might as well give up tryin' to make folks think different.

MARTHA. Maybe Rhody holds she's to blame.

BEELER. To blame? To blame for what?

MARTHA. For him a-peterin' out.

BEELER. What 's she got to do with it?

MARTHA. Maybe she ain't got nothin' to do with it, and maybe she's got a whole lot.

BEELER. Marthy, I don't want it to get out, but you're a plum' luny sentimental old maid fool!

(UNCLE ABE *has been hovering, with superstitious interest, near the picture of Pan and the Pilgrim. With side glances at it, he speaks, taking advantage of the lull in conversation which follows* BEELER'S *outburst.*)

UNCLE ABE. Mistah Beelah, 'scuse me troublin' you, but—'scuse me troublin' you.

BEELER. What is it, Abe?

UNCLE ABE. It's purty brash o' me to be askin', but—Mista Beelah, fur de Lawd's sake give me that thar devil—pictuh!

BEELER. What do *you* want with it?

UNCLE ABE. Want to hang it up in my ole cabin. (*His tone rises to one of eager pleading.*) Mars Beelah, you give it to me! For Gawd's sake, say Ole Uncle Abe kin have it, to hang up in his ole cabin.

BEELER. Well, if you feel as strong as that about it, Abe, take it along.

UNCLE ABE. (*As he unpins it with feverish eagerness.*) Thank ye, Mistah Beelah, thank ye. I'll wo'k fur ye and I'll slave fur ye, long as the worl' stan's. Maybe it ain't goin' to stan' much longer aftah all. Maybe de chariot s comin' down in de fiery clouds 'fo' great while. An' what 'll yo' ole Uncle Abe be doin'? He 'll be on his knees 'fo' a big roarin' fire, singing hallelujah, an' a-jammin' red-hot needles right plum' frough dis heah black devil's breas' bone! I 'se got him now! I 'll fix 'm. (*Shakes his fist at the print, as he goes toward the kitchen.*) Put yo' black spell on the Lawd's chosen, would ye? I 'se got ye. I 'll make ye sing, "Jesus, my ransom," right out 'n yo' ugly black mouf!

(*Exit.*)

BEELER. There's a purty exhibition for this present year o' grace! Thinks our friend Pan there has bewitched the healer.

MARTHA. Maybe he has!

BEELER. Thought you said Rhody done it.

MARTHA. Same thing, I reckon, by all that you tell about that Panjandrum and his goin's on!

BEELER. Nonsense!

MARTHA. If you 're so wise, why do *you* think Michaelis petered out?

BEELER. Could n't stand the strain. Bit off more 'n he could chaw, in the healin' line.—Never looked at Rhody.

MARTHA. Looked at her till he could n't see nothin' else, in heaven or earth or the other place.

BEELER. You 're dead wrong. I tell you he never looked cross-eyed at Rhody, nor Rhody at him. Doctor 's more in her line.—By the way, did you give the Doctor a snack to stay his stomach?

MARTHA. Done nothin' but feed him all night long. Seems to be mighty exhaustin' work to tend a sick baby.

BEELER. Does he think it 'll live?

MARTHA. Not likely. But he thinks he will, if fed reg'lar.—What do you call that trance the baby 's in?

BEELER. Doctor calls it comy. Spelled it out for me: c-o-m-a, comy.

(BEELER *goes out on the porch and disappears.* MARTHA *continues her task of tidying up the room.* MICHAELIS *enters from the stair, carrying his hat and a foot-traveller's knapsack.* MARTHA *regards him with curiosity, tempered now by feminine sympathy with the defeated.*)

MARTHA. Good morning, sir.

MICHAELIS. (*Tonelessly.*) Good morning.

MARTHA. (*Pointing at his hat and knapsack.*) Hope you ain't off. Don't mind sayin' the way you acted was human decent, sendin' for Doctor when you found the baby wa' n't dead, an' you wa' n't no healer any more.

MICHAELIS. Is it any better?

(MARTHA *makes a disconsolate gesture, implying that there is little or no hope.* MICHAELIS *turns away with bent head.* ANNIE *enters from the kitchen.* MICHAELIS *holds out his hand to her, and she takes it with shy hesitation.*)

MARTHA. Guess you 'd like to know where Rhody is, would n't you? She 's where she 's been all night,—out yonder with the sick folks.

MICHAELIS. What is she doing there?

MARTHA. Feedin' 'em, first off, an' then heart'nin' of 'em up. That 's a purty hard job, I reckon; but it 's the way o' women when they feel like she does.

(MICHAELIS *sinks in a chair, drawing* ANNIE *to him.* MRS. BEELER'S *bell rings;* MARTHA *goes out by the hall door.* ANNIE *watches his bent head in silence for a moment.*)

ANNIE. Are you ever going up again, on the rope?

MICHAELIS. (*Not remembering.*) On the rope?

ANNIE. You know . . . the magic rope.—Ain't you ever going to climb up in the sky again?

MICHAELIS. (*Recollecting.*) Never again, Annie. Never again.

ANNIE. Have you got the rope still?

MICHAELIS. No, I have lost it.

ANNIE. Won't you ever find it?

MICHAELIS. It can only be found by some one who will know how to use it better than I did.

ANNIE. How better?

MICHAELIS. By some one who can climb up, toward the sun and the stars, and yet never leave the earth, the cities, and the people.

ANNIE. Then he 'll have to take them up with him. (MICHAELIS *nods for yes.*) Gracious! (*She runs to the porch door to meet* RHODA, *who appears outside.*) Cousin Rhoda! What do you think he says about the magic rope?

RHODA. What, Annie?

ANNIE. He says that first thing you know, everything will be going up in the air, towns and people and everything.

RHODA. Does he?

ANNIE. (*Runs out into the hall, balancing her arms above her head and gazing up laughingly.*) Dear me! That will be very *tippy!*

(RHODA *enters.*)

MICHAELIS. You are here! The fear came over me, just now—

RHODA. I could not go until I had told you the truth—about myself—about us.

MICHAELIS. You will tell me the whole truth, and I will tell you the same. But that will be for later. Come! Come away with me, into the new life.

RHODA. A life rooted in the failure of all that life has meant to you from the beginning!

MICHAELIS. Until yesterday I did not know what my life was.

RHODA. You do not know that, even yet! You know it now less than ever—what your life is, what it means to you, what it means to the world.

MICHAELIS. To the world it can mean nothing. That is ended. But to us it

can mean happiness. Let us make haste to gather it. Come!

RHODA. Where do you want me to go?

MICHAELIS. Anywhere—to that place I told you of—high in the great mountains.

RHODA. I was there last night.

MICHAELIS. In your thoughts?

RHODA. I was there, and saw all the beauty of it, all the peace. But one thing was not there, and for lack of it, in a little while the beauty faded and the peace was gone.

MICHAELIS. What was not there?

RHODA. The work you have to do.

MICHAELIS. That was a dream I could not realize. I have striven, and I have failed.

RHODA. Do you know why you have failed?

MICHAELIS. Yes.

RHODA. Tell me why.

MICHAELIS. Because I have loved you more than the visions that came to me in desert places, more than the powers that fell upon me at the bedside of the sick, more than the spirit hands and spirit voices that have guided me on my way.

RHODA. What of the sick and suffering out yonder, who are waiting and hoping against hope? What of them?

MICHAELIS. I cannot help them.

RHODA. Once you dreamed you could.

MICHAELIS. Yes. But that is over.

RHODA. And who is to blame that that great dream is over?

MICHAELIS. No one is to blame. It has happened so.

RHODA. Does n't it seem strange that the love of a woman entering into your heart should take away such a dream as that?

MICHAELIS. I do not question. It is so.

RHODA. But if your love had fallen, by some sad chance, upon a woman who was not worthy of love?

MICHAELIS. What are you saying?

RHODA. You know less than nothing of me. You have not asked me a single question about my life.

MICHAELIS. There was no need.

RHODA. There was need! There was need!

MICHAELIS. Be careful what you say. Go on!

RHODA. In the first hour of our meeting, and all the hours of the next day, you swept me along and lifted me above myself, like a strong wind. I did n't know what you were. I did n't know why I was happy and exalted. It was so long since I had been happy, and I had never been as happy as that, or anything like it. Then, yesterday morning, came the revelation of what you were, like a blinding light out of the sky! And while I stood dazed, trembling, I saw something descend upon you like a shadow. You loved me, and that love was dreadful to you. You thought it was so because I was a woman and stole your spirit's strength away. But it was not that. It was because I was a *wicked* woman.

MICHAELIS. Why do you call yourself a wicked woman?

RHODA. Because I am so.

MICHAELIS. I cannot believe it.

RHODA. It is true.

MICHAELIS. Is that why you wanted to go away?

RHODA. Yes, I tried to go away. You would n't let me go. Then I tried to tell you the truth. I knew why I took your strength away, and I had nerved myself to tell you why. But you began to speak—those wild words. I could not resist you. You took me in your arms; and all the power of your soul went from you, and your life went crashing down in darkness. (*Long pause.*)

MICHAELIS. Wicked? A wicked woman?

RHODA. I was young then, wild-hearted, pitifully ignorant. I thought that love had come to me. Girls are so eager for love. They snatch at the shadow of it.—That is what I did.—I am not trying to plead for myself.—Some things are not to be forgiven.—Somewhere in my nature there was a taint—a plague-spot.—If life is given me, I shall find it and root it out. I only ask for time to do that. But meanwhile I have done what I could. I have told you the truth. I have set you free. I have given you back your mission.

(DR. LITTLEFIELD *enters, carrying his hat and medicine case. He looks sharply at* RHODA, *then turns to* MICHAELIS. *His manner towards him is politely contemptuous, toward* RHODA *it is full of covert passion, modified by his habitual cynicism and satire.*)

LITTLEFIELD. (*To* RHODA.) Good morning. (*To* MICHAELIS.) Good morning, my friend. I understood that you sent for me, last night.

MICHAELIS. I did.

LITTLEFIELD. Glad to accommodate a fellow practitioner, even if he is in a side

line. Some folks think your way of business is a little shady, but Lord, if they knew the secrets of *our* charnel-house!

MICHAELIS. How did you leave the child?

LITTLEFIELD. Done for. I said I was worth a million of you in a case like this, but I did n't realize how far things had gone. The next time, call me in a little sooner. (*He writes on his note pad, tears out a leaf, and lays it on the table.*) Mrs. Beeler will continue the old prescription, alternating with this. (*He puts the note pad in his pocket, and turns to* RHODA. *He speaks in a tone which implies command, under the veil of request.*) Will you walk a ways with me, Miss Williams?

RHODA. (*Pale and trembling.*) No.

LITTLEFIELD. Pardon! I must have a short talk. It is important.

RHODA. I cannot go with you.

LITTLEFIELD. I think you had better reconsider.

MICHAELIS. (*Astonished at his tone.*) You have heard that she does not wish to go.

LITTLEFIELD. (*Ignoring* MICHAELIS.) I have no time to waste, and I shall not stop to mince my words. You are coming with me, and you are coming now.

MICHAELIS. (*To* RHODA.) Who is this man?

LITTLEFIELD. (*Wheeling upon him angrily.*) 'Pon my honor! "Who is this man?" "Remove the worm!" Decidedly tart, from a miracle-monger in a state of bankruptcy.

MICHAELIS. (*To* RHODA.) Is this the man you told me of?

RHODA. (*Steadily.*) Yes.

LITTLEFIELD. (*To* RHODA, *as he eyes* MICHAELIS *with dislike.*) So you have called in a father confessor, eh? (*To* MICHAELIS.) Well, since the lady can't keep her secrets to herself, this *is* the man. Very painful, no doubt, but these little things will happen. (*To* RHODA.) I should have chosen a more secluded nook to say this in, but you 're skittish, as I have learned to my cost, and likely to bolt. What I want to say is, *don't* bolt. It won't do you any good.—I 've found you once, and I 'll find you again, no matter what rabbit's hole you dodge into. (*To* MICHAELIS.) This ain't George Littlefield, M.D., talking now. It 's the caveman of Borneo. He 's got arms as long as rakes, and teeth that are a caution.—Look out for him!

MICHAELIS. (*Holding himself in stern restraint.*) Your arms and teeth are long enough, and eager enough to do damage, but they will not avail you here. This girl is in other keeping, and I dare to say, better.

LITTLEFIELD. In other keeping, eh? Yours, I suppose.

MICHAELIS. Yes, mine.

LITTLEFIELD. Bless my soul! (*He turns to* RHODA, *pointedly ignoring* MICHAELIS.) Look here, Rho, be sensible. I 'm tired of this hole of a town already. We 'll go west and renew our youth. Country 's big, and nobody to meddle. You 'll flourish like a green bay tree. (RHODA *turns distractedly, as to escape; he intercepts her.*) Confound it, if you 're set on it, I 'll marry you! Say yes, and let John the Baptist here give us his blessing. Speak up. Is it a go?—Till death us do part.

MICHAELIS. Death has already parted you and her.

LITTLEFIELD. So? I feel like a reasonably healthy corpse.

MICHAELIS. There is no health in you. Every word you speak gives off corruption.

LITTLEFIELD. Indeed! My advice to you is, make tracks for your starvation desert. A parcel of locoed Indians are about right for a busted prophet.

MICHAELIS. What I am is no matter. What this girl is, though you lived a thousand years, you would never have the grace to imagine. She gave you her young love, in childish blindness, not knowing what she did, and you killed it idly, wantonly, as a beast tortures its frail victim, for sport. You find her again, still weak and bleeding from her wounds, and you fling her marriage, in words whose every syllable is an insult. Marriage! When every fibre of her nature must cry out against you, if she is woman. Take your words and your looks from her, and that instantly, or you will curse the day you ever brought your evil presence into her life. (*He advances upon him threateningly.*) Instantly, I say, or by the wrath of God your wretched soul, if you have one, shall go this hour to its account!

LITTLEFIELD. (*Backing toward the door, scared, but keeping his brazen tone.*) All right.—I 'm off.—Caveman for caveman, you 've got the reach! (*To* RHODA.) But remember, my lady, we 're not quits

by a jug-full. You 'll hear from me yet.

MICHAELIS. She shall never hear from you, nor of you.

LITTLEFIELD. (*In the door.*) Last call, old girl!—Women!

(*He goes out, slamming the door behind him. Long pause.*)

MICHAELIS. Poor child! Poor child!

RHODA. I am sorry that you have had to suffer this.

MICHAELIS. It is you who have suffered.

(MARTHA *enters from the hall, wheeling* MRS. BEELER *in the invalid chair. She lies lower than in the first act, her manner is weaker and more dejected.* RHODA, *whose back is turned, goes on as the two women enter.*)

RHODA. I deserve to suffer, but it will always be sweet to me that in my need you defended me, and gave me back my courage.

(MICHAELIS *goes to* MRS. BEELER; *she gives him her left hand as at first.*)

MRS. BEELER. My poor friend! (MARTHA, *resigning the chair to* RHODA, *goes out.* MRS. BEELER *looks up at* RHODA *anxiously.*) What were you saying when I came in? (*As* RHODA *does not answer, she turns to* MICHAELIS.) Something about your defending her.—Against what?

MICHAELIS. Nothing. Her nature is its own defence.

MRS. BEELER. (*Caressing her.*) Ah, no! She needs help. She cannot bear it that this disaster has come, through her. It has made her morbid. She says things about herself, that make me tremble. Has she spoken to you—about herself?

MICHAELIS. She has laid her heart bare to me.

MRS. BEELER. That is good. Young people, when they are generous, always lay disaster at their own door. (*She kisses* RHODA. *The girl goes into the porch, where she lingers a moment, then disappears.* MRS. BEELER *sinks back in her chair again, overtaken by despondency.*) Is n't it strange that I should be lying here again, and all those poor people waking up into a new day that is no new day at all, but the old weary day they have known so long? Is n't it strange, and sad?

MICHAELIS. I ask you not to lose hope.

MRS. BEELER. (*Rousing from her dejection into vague excitement.*) You ask me that?—Is there—any hope? Oh, don't deceive me—now! I could n't bear it now!—Is there any hope?

MICHAELIS. A half-hour ago I thought there was none. But now I say, have hope.

MRS. BEELER. (*Eagerly.*) Do you? Do you? Oh, I wonder—I wonder if that could be the meaning—?

MICHAELIS. The meaning—?

MRS. BEELER. Of something I felt, just now, as I sat there in my room by the open window.

MICHAELIS. What was it?

MRS. BEELER. I—I don't know how to describe it.—It was like a new sweetness in the air.

(*She looks out at the open window, where the spring breeze lightly wafts the curtains.*)

MICHAELIS. The lilacs have opened during the night.

MRS. BEELER. It was not the lilacs.—I get it now again, in this room. (*She looks toward the lilies and shakes her head.*) No, it is not the lilies either. If it were anyone else, I should be ashamed to say what I think. (*She draws him down and speaks mysteriously.*) It is not real flowers at all!

(*Song rises outside—faint and distant.*)

MICHAELIS. What is it to you?

MRS. BEELER. It is like—it is like some kindness in the air, some new-born happiness—or a new hope rising. Now you will think I am—not quite right in my mind, as Mat does, and Martha!

MICHAELIS. Mrs. Beeler, there is such a perfume about us this beautiful Easter morning. You perceive it, with senses which suffering and a pure soul have made fine beyond the measure of woman. There is a kindness in the air, new-born happiness, and new-risen hope.

MRS. BEELER. From whose heart does it rise?

MICHAELIS. From mine, from Rhoda's heart, though she knows it not, from yours, and soon, by God's mercy, from the heart of this waiting multitude.

(*The song, though still distant, grows louder.* MRS. BEELER *turns to* MICHAELIS *and gazes intently into his face.*)

MRS. BEELER. The light has come into your face again! You are—you are—Oh, my brother, what has come to you?

MICHAELIS. I have shaken off my burden. Do you shake off yours. What is pain but a kind of selfishness? What is dis-

ease but a kind of sin? Lay your suffering and your sickness from you as an out-worn garment. Rise up! It is Easter morning. One comes, needing you. Rise up and welcome her!

(MRS. BEELER *rises and goes to meet* RHODA, *entering from the porch.*)

RHODA. Aunt Mary! You are walking again!

MRS. BEELER. He told me to arise, and once more my dead limbs heard.

RHODA. God in His mercy be thanked!

MRS. BEELER. I rose without knowing what I did. It was as if a wind lifted me.

RHODA. Yes, yes. For good, this time!

MRS. BEELER. So different from yesterday. I was still weak then, and my limbs were heavy. Now I feel as if wings were on my shoulders. (*She looks toward the outer door, and listens to the singing, now risen to a more joyful strain.*) I must go out to them. (*She turns to* MICHAELIS.) Say that I may go out, and give them the good tidings of great joy.

MICHAELIS. May the Lord be with you as you go! (*To* RHODA, *who starts to help her aunt.*) Alone!

MRS. BEELER. Yes, alone. I want to go alone. (*She takes a lily from the vase, and lifting it above her head, goes out through the porch, which is now flooded with sunshine. As she goes out she says:*) The Easter sun has risen, with healing in its wings!

(*She crosses the porch and disappears.*)

RHODA. I felt something dragging me back. It was Aunt Mary's spirit.

MICHAELIS. No, it was mine.

RHODA. Yours?

MICHAELIS. My spirit, crying to you that I was delivered.

RHODA. I delivered you. That is enough happiness for one life.

MICHAELIS. You delivered me, yes. But not as you dream. Yesterday when the multitude began to gather, the thing I had been waiting for all my life was there, and I—because of you—I was not ready. In that blind hour my life sank in ruin.—I had thought love denied to such as had my work to do, and in the darkness of that thought disaster overwhelmed me.—I have come to know that God does not deny love to any of his children, but gives it as a beautiful and simple gift to them all.—Upon each head be the use that is made of it!

RHODA. It is not I—who—harm you?

MICHAELIS. It is you who bless me, and give me back the strength that I had lost.

RHODA. I?

MICHAELIS. A little while ago you told me your life's bitter story. I tasted your struggle, went down with you into the depths of your anguish, and in those depths,—the miracle! Behold, once more the stars looked down upon me from their places, and I stood wondering as a child wonders. Out of those depths arose new-born happiness and new-risen hope. For in those star-lit depths of pain and grief, I had found at last true love. You needed me. You needed all the powers I had thrown away for your sake. You needed what the whole world needs—healing, healing, and as I rose to meet that need, the power that I had lost poured back into my soul.

RHODA. Oh, if I thought that could be!

MICHAELIS. By the mystery that is man and the mercy that is God, I say it is so.—(*Puts his hand on her head, and gazes into her face.*) I looked into your eyes once, and they were terrible as an army with banners. I look again now, and I see they are only a girl's eyes, very weak very pitiful. I told you of a place, high in the great mountains. I tell you now of another place higher yet, in more mysterious mountains. Let us go there together, step by step, from faith to faith and from strength to strength, for I see depths of life open and heights of love come out, which I never dreamed of till now!

(*A song rises outside, nearer and louder than before.*)

RHODA. Against your own words they trust you still.

MICHAELIS. It was you who held them to their trust!

RHODA. You will go out to them now.

MICHAELIS. (*As he kisses her.*) Until the victory!

(*The song rises to a great hymn, of martial and joyous rhythm. They go together to the threshold. They look at each other in silence.* RHODA *speaks, with suppressed meaning.*)

RHODA. Shall it be—on earth?

MICHAELIS. On the good human earth which I never possessed till now!

RHODA. But now—these waiting souls prisoned in their pain—

MICHAELIS. By faith all prisoned souls shall be delivered.

RHODA. By faith.

MICHAELIS. By faith which makes all things possible, which brings all things to pass.

(*He disappears.* RHODA *stands looking after him. The young mother hurries in.*)

THE YOUNG MOTHER. (*Ecstatic, breathless.*) Come here—My baby! I believe —I do believe— (*She disappears.*)

RHODA. (*Following her.*) I believe. I do believe!

(*The music rises into a vast chorus of many mingled strains.*)

THE SCARECROW

A TRAGEDY OF THE LUDICROUS

BY

Percy MacKaye

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THE SCARECROW

The Scarecrow represents the romance of the fantastic, with its basis in American history. It was suggested by Hawthorne's story of "Feathertop," published originally in 1852 and afterwards included in the *Mosses from an Old Manse.* Mr. MacKaye has modified the nature of the characters decidedly, has added characters, and, as he says in the preface to the published play, has substituted the element of human sympathy for that of irony.

Percy MacKaye was born in New York City, March 16, 1875, the son of Steele MacKaye and Mary Medbery, who herself dramatized *Pride and Prejudice.* He grew up in the atmosphere of the theatre and before entering Harvard College in 1893 he had written a series of choral songs for his father's projected "Spectatorio" at the World's Fair in 1893. He graduated from Harvard College in 1897. During his junior year, he wrote a poetical play *Sappho,* which was acted by Harvard and Wellesley students. After two years of European travel and study he returned to New York and taught in a private school, continuing to write plays. The turning point in his career came when his *Canterbury Pilgrims* was accepted by E. H. Sothern in 1903. Since 1904 he has devoted himself entirely to dramatic work, living at Cornish, New Hampshire.

Mr. MacKaye stands in our drama for high standards of dramatic writing. He represents the movement for a civic and national theatre, untrammelled by commercial considerations, and he has brought into recent prominence the idea of the community masque or pageant, in itself one of the most significant dramatic movements of the time. At the same time he is not simply a theorist, but has proved his ability to write plays that succeed upon the stage.

He has written sixteen plays, ten masques or pageants, and four operas. His plays have been performed except the first, *A Garland to Sylvia,* and *Fenris the Wolf,* a masterly study of the mutual effects of purity and passion, laid in a setting of Northern mythology. The acted plays, arranged in the order of their composition and with their dates of publication indicated in parentheses, are: *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1903), a dramatization of the relations between Chaucer and his characters, first performed at the Park Extension Theatre, Savannah, Georgia, April 30, 1909; *The Scarecrow* (1908); *Jeanne d'Arc,* an historical play (1906), first produced at the Lyric Theatre, Philadelphia, October 15, 1906; *Sappho and Phaon* (1907), a Greek play with the theme of the contrasted influence of family ties and sexual love, first performed at the Opera House, Providence, Rhode Island, October 14, 1907; *Mater* (1908), a comedy based on American politics, first performed at the Van Ness Theatre, San Francisco, California, August 3, 1908; *Anti-Matrimony* (1910), a clever satire upon the influence of

modern continental playwrights upon the ideas of marriage held by two young Americans, first performed in the Theatre at Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 10, 1910; *Tomorrow* (1912), a play dealing seriously with the problem of selection in the matter of marriage, first performed at the Little Theatre, Philadelphia, October 31, 1913; *A Thousand Years Ago* (1914), an Oriental romance, first performed at the Shubert Theatre, New York, December 1, 1913, and *Yankee Fantasies* (1912), five one-act plays, four of which have been performed, and two of which, *Gettysburg* and *Sam Average,* are upon national themes.

The group of Masques and Pageants include the *Saint Gaudens Masque-Prologue* (1909), first produced June 20, 1905, by the Cornish Colony in honor of Augustus St. Gaudens; the *Gloucester Pageant* (1903), produced under the auspices of the city of Gloucester in honor of President Taft, August 3, 1909; *A Masque of Labor* (1912), projected but not yet performed; *Sanctuary, a Bird Masque* (1914), given first, September 12, 1913, in honor of President and Mrs. Wilson, at Meriden, New Hampshire, and repeated many times, 120 performances being given in the Southern and Western States before over 200,000 spectators by the Redpath Chautauqua players; *Saint Louis: A Civic Masque* (1914), given in St. Louis to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the city, from May 28 to June 1, 1914; *The New Citizenship, a Civic Ritual* (1915), given February 14, 1916, in New York City, for Lincoln's Birthday and, most significant, *Caliban, A Community Masque* (1916), produced May 25 to June 2, 1916, in New York City as a part of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration. This masque, founded on *The Tempest,* and having as its main theme the regeneration of Caliban through his love for Miranda, was magnificently produced at the Stadium of the College of the City of New York and marks a new epoch in the community drama. Of the operas, *Sinbad the Sailor* (1917) and *The Immigrants* (1915), with music by Mr. F. S. Converse, have not as yet been produced. *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1916), with music by Mr. Reginald de Koven, was first produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, March 8, 1917.

The Scarecrow was first performed by the Harvard Dramatic Club, on December 7, 1909. Its first professional performance was given at the Middlesex Theatre, Middletown, Connecticut, December 30, 1910. The cast as given remained the same at its first New York performance, at the Garrick Theatre January 17, 1911, except that the part of "Rachel" was taken by Miss Fola La Follette. The play is dedicated by the author to his mother, for the reason (as he has told the editor) that, but for her sympathetic interest and assistance, it would probably not have been written. The version here printed has been revised by Mr. MacKaye and represents the acting version used by Mr. Frank Reicher during two seasons in the United States, and by Miss Muriel Pratt at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, England. It is also the version translated into

German by Dr. Walther Fischer, of the University of Pennsylvania, for the professional use of Herr Rudolf Schildkraut in Germany, at the "Deutsches Theater," Berlin, under the direction of Professor Max Reinhardt. It has also been translated into French by Professor M. Garnier, of the Sorbonne, Paris.

The individual plays may be found in printed form, as indicated above. Mr. MacKaye's poems, which have appeared in several editions, may be had most conveniently in the complete edition of his *Poems and Plays,* in two volumes, issued by Macmillan Company in 1916. In this edition, *The Canterbury Pilgrims, Jeanne d'Arc, Sappho and Phaon, The Scarecrow,* and *Mater* have been reprinted. His essays on dramatic subjects may be found in *The Playhouse and the Play* (1909), and *The Civic Theatre* (1912). He has also in press: *Steele MacKaye, A Memoir and Two Plays.* For an interesting foreign criticism of his work, especially of *The Scarecrow,* see M. Garnier, *M. Percy MacKaye,* in *La Revue du Mois,* April 10, 1909.

The editor is indebted to the courtesy of Mr. MacKaye for permission to reprint the play and for the biographical details and the information concerning the plays upon which this introduction is based.

NOTE TO REVISED EDITION

Since the publication of the First Edition, Mr. Mackaye has produced the following dramatic works:

Plays—Washington, the Man Who Made Us (1919), a Ballad Play, was first produced in its entirety (under the title "George Washington") at the Belasco Theatre, Washington, D. C., February 23, 1920, one portion of it (the Valley Forge Action) having been previously produced in French—translated by Pierre de Lanux—at Copeau's Theatre du Vieux Colombier, New York, Feb. 17, 1919. This Action and other Actions of the play have also been translated into fourteen different languages by the Foreign Language Information Service Bureau of the Red Cross for publication and production in foreign language theatres in America.

Masques—Caliban was also presented on a still more splendid scale, by co-operation of nineteen districts of Greater Boston, at the Harvard Stadium, Cambridge, June 28 to July 21 (inclusive), 1917.

The Evergreen Tree (1917), a Christmas Masque, was first produced by North Dakota Agricultural College, at Fargo, N. D., Dec. 15, 1917.

The Roll Call (1918), a Masque of the Red Cross, was first produced during Roll Call Week, December 16–23, 1918, simultaneously in different states throughout America. *The Will of Song* (with Harry Barnhart, 1919), a Dramatic Service of Community Singing, was first produced at Orange, N. J., May 2 and 3, 1919.

Operas—Rip Van Winkle, a Folk Opera (1919), with music by Reginald De Koven, was first produced by the Chicago Opera Association at the Auditorium Theatre, Chicago, Jan. 2, 1920.

Note to Third Edition.

Since 1920, two plays by Mr. Mackaye have been produced:

This Fine-Pretty World, a comedy of the Kentucky mountains (1924), first produced at the Neighborhood Playhouse, New York City, December 26, 1923.

Napoleon Crossing the Rockies, a play of the Kentucky mountains (*Century Magazine,* April, 1924), first produced at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, May 21, 1924.

Since 1920, Mr. Mackaye has held the Fellowship in Poetry at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. In recognition of his services, the University conferred upon him, in June 1924, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Note to Fourth Edition.

An extended treatment of Mr. MacKaye's plays is to be found in T. H. Dickinson's *Playwrights of the New American Theater* (1924), pp. 1-55. See also the present editor's *History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* Vol. 2, pp. 27–49.

TO

MY MOTHER

In Memory of Auspicious
"Counting of the Crows"
By Old New England Cornfields

CAST OF CHARACTERS

At the First Professional Performance

Middlesex Theatre, Middletown, Connecticut, December 30, 1910

JUSTICE GILEAD MERTON.....Mr. Brigham Royce
GOODY RICKBY ("Blacksmith Bess").....Miss Alice Fischer
LORD RAVENSBANE ("Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova"), their hypothetical son.....Mr. Frank Reicher
DICKON, a Yankee improvisation of the Prince of Darkness..Mr. Edmund Breese
RACHEL MERTON, niece of the Justice.....Miss Beatrice Irwin
MISTRESS CYNTHIA MERTON, sister of the Justice.....Mrs. Felix Morris
RICHARD TALBOT, ESQUIRE, betrothed to RACHEL.....Mr. Earle Browne
SIR CHARLES REDDINGTON, Lieutenant-Governor.....Mr. H. J. Carvill
MISTRESS REDDINGTON, AMELIA REDDINGTON } his daughters. { .....Miss Zenaidee Williams; .....Miss Georgia Dvorak
CAPTAIN BUGBY, the Governor's Secretary.....Mr. Regan Hughston
MINISTER DODGE.....Mr. Clifford Leigh
MISTRESS DODGE, his wife.....Miss Eleanor Sheldon
REV. MASTER RAND, of Harvard College.....Mr. William Lewis
REV. MASTER TODD, of Harvard College.....Mr. Harry Lillford
MICAH, a servant of the Justice.....Mr. Harold N. Cheshir

Time—Late seventeenth century.
Place—A town in Massachusetts.

THE SCARECROW

ACT FIRST.

The interior of a blacksmith shop. On the right of the stage toward the center there is a forge. On the left stands a loft, from which are hanging dried corn-stalks, hay, and the yellow ears of cattle-corn. Toward the rear is a wide double door, closed when the curtain rises. Through this door—when later it is opened—is visible a New England landscape in the late springtime: a distant wood; stone walls, high elms, a well-sweep; and, in the near foreground, a ploughed field, from which the green shoots of early corn are just appearing. The blackened walls of the shop are covered with a miscellaneous collection of old iron, horseshoes, and cart-wheels, the usual appurtenances of a smithy. In the right-hand corner, however, is an array of things quite out of keeping with the shop proper: musical instruments, puppets, tall clocks, and fantastical junk. Conspicuous amongst these articles is a large standing mirror, framed grotesquely in old gold and curtained by a dull stuff, embroidered with peaked caps and crescent moons.

Just before the scene opens, a hammer is heard ringing briskly upon steel. As the curtain rises there is discovered, standing at the anvil in the flickering light of a bright flame from the forge, a woman—powerful, ruddy, proud with a certain masterful beauty, white-haired (as though prematurely), bare-armed to the elbows, clad in a dark skirt (above her ankles), a loose blouse, open at the throat; a leathern apron and a workman's cap. The woman is GOODY RICKBY. *On the anvil she is shaping a piece of iron. Beside her stands a framework of iron formed like the ribs and backbone of a man. For a few moments she continues to ply her hammer, amid a shower of sparks, till suddenly the flame on the forge dies down.*

GOODY RICKBY. Dickon! More flame.

A VOICE. (*Above her.*) Yea, Goody.

(*The flame in the forge spurts up high and suddenly.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Nay, not so fierce.

THE VOICE. (*At her side.*) *Votre pardon, madame.* (*The flame subsides.*) Is that better?

GOODY RICKBY. That will do. (*With her tongs, she thrusts the iron into the flame; it turns white-hot.*) Quick work; nothing like brimstone for the smithy trade. (*At the anvil, she begins to weld the iron rib onto the framework.*) There, my beauty! We 'll make a stout set of ribs for you. I 'll see to it this year that I have a scarecrow can outstand all the nor'easters that blow. I 've no notion to lose my corn-crop this summer. (*Outside, the faint cawings of crows are heard. Putting down her tongs and hammer,* GOODY RICKBY *strides to the double door, and flinging it wide open, lets in the gray light of dawn. She looks out over the fields and shakes her fist.*) So ye 're up before me and the sun, are ye? (*Squinting against the light.*) There 's one! Nay, two. Aha!

One for sorrow,
Two for mirth—

Good! This time we 'll have the laugh on our side. (*She returns to the forge, where again the fire has died out.*) Dickon! Fire! Come, come, where be thy wits?

THE VOICE. (*Sleepily from the forge.*) 'T is early, dame.

GOODY RICKBY. The more need—

(*Takes up her tongs.*)

THE VOICE. (*Screams.*) Ow!

GOODY RICKBY. Ha! Have I got thee? (*From the blackness of the forge she pulls out with her tongs, by the right ear, the figure of a devil, horned and tailed. In general aspect, though he resembles a mediæval familiar demon, yet the suggestions of a goatish beard, a shrewdly humorous smile, and (when he speaks) the slightest of nasal drawls, remotely simulate a species of Yankee rustic.* GOODY RICKBY *substitutes her fingers for the tongs.*) Now, Dickon!

DICKON. *Deus!* I have n't been nabbed like that since St. Dunstan tweaked my nose. Well, sweet Goody?

GOODY RICKBY. The bellows!

DICKON. (*Going slowly to the forge.*) Why, 't is hardly dawn yet. Honest folks are still abed. It makes a long day.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Working while* DICKON *plies the bellows.*) Aye, for your black pets, the crows, to work in. That 's why we must be at it early. You heard 'em. We must have this scarecrow of ours out in the field at his post before sunrise. Here, I 've made the frame strong, so as to stand the weather; *you* must make the body lifelike so as to fool the crows. This year, we must make 'em think it 's a real human crittur.

DICKON. To fool the philosophers is my specialty, but the crows—hm!

GOODY RICKBY. Pooh! That staggers thee!

DICKON. Madame Rickby, prod not the quick of my genius. I am Phidias, I am Raphael, I am the Lord God!—You shall see—(*Demands with a gesture.*) Yonder broom-stick.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Fetching him a broom from the corner.*) Good boy!

DICKON. (*Straddling the handle.*) Ha, ha! gee up! my Salem mare. (*Then, pseudo-philosophically.*) A broomstick —that 's for imagination! (*He begins to construct the scarecrow, while* GOODY RICKBY, *assisting, brings the constructive parts from various nooks and corners.*) We are all pretty artists, to be sure, Bessie. Phidias, he sculptures the gods; Raphael, he paints the angels; the Lord God, he creates Adam; and Dickon —fetch me the poker—aha! Dickon! What doth Dickon? He nullifies 'em all; he endows the Scarecrow! A poker: here 's his conscience. There 's two fine legs to walk on,—imagination and conscience. Yonder flails now! The ideal —the *beau idéal,* dame—that 's what we artists seek. The apotheosis of scarecrows! And pray, what 's a scarecrow? Why, the antithesis of Adam.—"Let there be candles!" quoth the Lord God, sitting in the dark. "Let there be candle-extinguishers," saith Dickon. "I am made in the image of my maker," quoth Adam. "Look at yourself in the glass," saith Goodman Scarecrow. (*Taking two implements from* GOODY RICKBY.) Fine! fine! here are flails—one for wit, t' other for satire. *Sapristi!* with two such arms, my lad, how thou wilt work thy way in the world!

GOODY RICKBY. You talk as if you were making a real mortal, Dickon.

DICKON. To fool a crow, Goody, I must fashion a crittur that will first deceive a man.

GOODY RICKBY. He 'll scarce do that without a head. (*Pointing to the loft.*) What think ye of yonder Jack-o'-lantern? 'T was made last Hallowe'en.

DICKON. Rare, my Psyche! We shall collaborate. Here! (*Running up the ladder, he tosses down a yellow hollowed pumpkin to* GOODY RICKBY, *who catches it. Then rummaging forth an armful of cornstalks, ears, tassels, dried squashes, gourds, beets, etc., he descends and throws them in a heap on the floor.*) Whist! (*As he drops them.*) Gourd, carrot, turnip, beet:—the anatomy.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Placing the pumpkin on the shoulders.*) Look!

DICKON. *O Johannes Baptista!* What wouldst thou have given for such a head! I helped Salome to cut his off, dame, and it looked not half so appetizing on her charger. Tut! Copernicus wore once such a pumpkin, but it is rotten. Look at his golden smile! Hail, Phœbus Apollo!

GOODY RICKBY. 'T is the finest scarecrow in town.

DICKON. Nay, poor soul, 't is but a skeleton yet. He must have a man's heart in him. (*Picking a big red beet from among the cornstalks, he places it under the left side of the ribs.*) Hush! Dost thou hear it *beat?*

GOODY RICKBY. Thou merry rogue!

DICKON. Now for the lungs of him. (*Snatching a small pair of bellows from a peg on the wall.*) That 's for eloquence! He 'll preach the black knaves a sermon on theft. And now—(*Here, with* GOODY RICKBY'S *help, he stuffs the framework with the gourds, corn, etc., from the loft, weaving the husks about the legs and arms.*) Here goes for digestion and inherited instincts! More corn, Goody. Now he 'll fight for his own flesh and blood!

GOODY RICKBY. (*Laughing.*) Dickon, I am proud of thee.

DICKON. Wait till you see his peruke. (*Seizing a feather duster made of crow's feathers.*) *Voici!* Scalps of the enemy! (*Pulling them apart, he arranges*

the feathers on the pumpkin, like a gentleman's wig.) A rare conqueror!

GOODY RICKBY. Oh, you beauty!

DICKON. And now a bit of comfort for dark days and stormy nights. (*Taking a piece of corn-cob with the kernels on it,* DICKON *makes a pipe, which he puts into the scarecrow's mouth.*) So! There, Goody! I tell thee, with yonder brand-new coat and breeches of mine—those there in my cupboard!—we 'll make him a lad to be proud of. (*Taking the clothes, which* GOODY RICKBY *brings—a pair of fine scarlet breeches and a gold-embroidered coat with ruffles of lace—he puts them upon the scarecrow. Then, eying it like a connoisseur, makes a few finishing touches.*) Why, dame, he 'll be a son to thee.

GOODY RICKBY. A son? Aye, if I had but a son!

DICKON. Why, here you have him. (*To the scarecrow.*) Thou wilt scare the crows off thy mother's cornfield—won't my pretty? And send 'em all over t' other side the wall to her dear neighbor's, the Justice Gilead Merton's.

GOODY RICKBY. Justice Merton! Nay, if they 'd only peck his eyes out, instead of his corn.

DICKON. (*Grinning.*) Yet the Justice was a dear friend of "Blacksmith Bess."

GOODY RICKBY. Aye, "Blacksmith Bess"! If I had n't had a good stout arm when he cast me off with the babe, I might have starved for all his worship cared.

DICKON. True, Bessie; 't was a scurvy trick he played on thee—and on me, that took such pains to bring you together—to steal a young maid's heart—

GOODY RICKBY. And then toss it away like a bad penny to the gutter! And the child—to die! (*Lifting her hammer in rage.*) Ha! If I could get the worshipful Justice Gilead into my power again—(*She drops the hammer sullenly on the anvil.*) But no! I shall beat my life away on this anvil, whilst my justice clinks his gold, and drinks his port to a fat old age. Justice! Ha—justice of God!

DICKON. Whist, dame! Talk of angels and hear the rustle of their relatives.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Turning, watches outside a girl's figure approaching.*) His niece—Rachel Merton! What can she want so early? Nay, I mind me; 't is the mirror. She 's a maid after our own hearts, boy,—no Sabbath-go-to-meeting airs about *her!* She hath read the books of the *magi* from cover to cover, and paid me good guineas for 'em, though her uncle knows naught on 't. Besides, she 's in love, Dickon.

DICKON. (*Indicating the scarecrow.*) Ah? With *him?* Is it a rendezvous?

GOODY RICKBY. (*With a laugh.*) Pff! Begone!

DICKON. (*Shakes his finger at the scarecrow.*) Thou naughty rogue!

(*Then, still smiling slyly, with his head placed confidentially next to the scarecrow's ear, as if whispering, and with his hand pointing to the maiden outside,* DICKON *fades away into air.* RACHEL *enters, nervous and hesitant.* GOODY RICKBY *makes her a curtsy, which she acknowledges by a nod, half absent-minded.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Mistress Rachel Merton—so early! I hope your uncle, our worshipful Justice, is not ill?

RACHEL. No, my uncle is quite well. The early morning suits me best for a walk. You are—quite alone?

GOODY RICKBY. Quite alone, mistress. (*Bitterly.*) Oh, folks don't call on Goody Rickby—except on business.

RACHEL. (*Absently, looking round in the dim shop.*) Yes—you must be busy. Is it—is it here?

GOODY RICKBY. You mean the—

RACHEL. (*Starting back, with a cry.*) Ah! who 's that?

GOODY RICKBY. (*Chuckling.*) Fear not, mistress; 't is nothing but a scarecrow. I 'm going to put him in my cornfield yonder. The crows are so pesky this year.

RACHEL. (*Draws her skirts away with a shiver.*) How loathsome!

GOODY RICKBY. (*Vastly pleased.*) He 'll do.

RACHEL. Ah, here!—This is *the* mirror?

GOODY RICKBY. Yea, mistress, and a wonderful glass it is, as I told you. I would n't sell it to most comers, but seeing how you and Master Talbot—

RACHEL. Yes; that will do.

GOODY RICKBY. You see, if the town folks guessed what it was, well— You 've heard tell of the gibbets on Salem Hill? There 's not many in New England like you, Mistress Rachel. You know enough to approve some miracles—outside the Scriptures.

RACHEL. You are quite sure the glass will do all you say? It—never fails?

GOODBY RICKBY. Ah, now, mistress, how could it? 'T is the glass of truth—(*insinuatingly*)—the glass of true lovers. It shows folks just as they are; no shams, no varnish. If a wolf should dress himself in a white sheep's wool, this glass would reflect the black beast inside it.

RACHEL. (*With awe.*) The black beast! But what of the sins of the soul, Goody? Vanity, hypocrisy, and — and inconstancy? Will it surely reveal them?

GOODY RICKBY. I have told you, my young lady. If it doth not as I say, bring it back and get your money again. Oh, trust me, sweeting, an old dame hath eyes in her heart yet. If your lover be false, this glass shall pluck his fine feathers!

RACHEL. (*With aloofness.*) 'T is no question of that. I wish the glass to—to amuse me.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Laughing.*) Why, then, try it on some of your neighbors.

RACHEL. You ask a large price for it.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Shrugs.*) I run risks. Besides, where will you get another?

RACHEL. That is true. Here, I will buy it. That is the sum you mentioned, I believe?

(*She hands a purse to* GOODY RICKBY, *who opens it and counts over some coin.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Let see; let see.

RACHEL. Well?

GOODY RICKBY. Good: 't is good. Folks call me a witch, mistress. Well—harkee—a witch's word is as good as a justice's gold. The glass is yours—with my blessing.

RACHEL. Spare yourself that, dame. But the glass: how am I to get it? How will you send it to me—quietly?

GOODY RICKBY. Trust me for that. I 've a willing lad that helps me with such errands; a neighbor o' mine. (*Calls.*) Ebenezer!

RACHEL. (*Startled.*) What! is he here?

GOODY RICKBY. In the hayloft. The boy 's an orphan; he sleeps there o' times. Ebenezer!

(*A raw, disheveled country boy appears in the loft, slides down the ladder, and shuffles up sleepily.*)

THE BOY. Evenin'.

RACHEL. (*Drawing* GOODY RICKBY *aside.*) You understand; I desire no comment about this purchase.

GOODY RICKBY. Nor I, mistress, be sure.

RACHEL. Is he—?

GOODY RICKBY. (*Tapping her forehead significantly.*) Trust his wits who hath no wit; he 's mum.

RACHEL. Oh!

THE BOY. (*Gaping.*) Job?

GOODY RICKBY. Yea, rumple-head! His job this morning is to bear yonder glass to the house of Justice Merton—the big one on the hill; to the side door. Mind, no gabbing. Doth he catch?

THE BOY. (*Nodding and grinning.*) 'E swallows.

RACHEL. But is the boy strong enough?

GOODY RICKBY. Him? (*Pointing to the anvil.*) Ebenezer!

(*The boy spits on his palms, takes hold of the anvil, lifts it, drops it again, sits on it, and grins at the door, just as* RICHARD TALBOT *appears there, from outside.*)

RACHEL. Gracious!

GOODY RICKBY. Trust him. He 'll carry the glass for you.

RACHEL. I will return home at once, then. Let him go quietly to the side door, and wait for me. Good-morning.

(*Turning, she confronts* RICHARD.)

RICHARD. Good-morning.

RACHEL. Richard!—Squire Talbot, you—you are abroad early.

RICHARD. As early as Mistress Rachel. Is it pardonable? I caught sight of you walking in this direction, so I thought it wise to follow, lest—

(*Looks hard at* GOODY RICKBY.)

RACHEL. Very kind. Thanks. We can return together. (*To* GOODY RICKBY.) You will make sure that I receive the—the article.

GOODY RICKBY. Trust me, mistress.

(*She curtsies to* RICHARD.)

RICHARD. (*Bluntly, looking from one to the other.*) What article?

(RACHEL *ignores the question and starts to pass out.* RICHARD *frowns at* GOODY RICKBY, *who stammers.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Begging your pardon, sir?

RICHARD. What article? I said. (*After a short, embarrassed pause, more sternly.*) Well?

GOODY RICKBY. Oh, the article! Yonder old glass, to be sure, sir. A quaint piece, your honor.

RICHARD. Rachel, you have n't come here at sunrise to buy—that thing?

RACHEL. Verily, "that thing," and at sunrise. A pretty time for a pretty purchase. Are you coming?

RICHARD. (*In a low tone.*) More witchcraft nonsense? Do you realize this is serious?

RACHEL. Oh, of course. You know I am desperately mystical, so pray let us not discuss it. Good-bye.

RICHARD. Rachel, just a moment. If you want a mirror, you shall have the prettiest one in New England. Or I will import you one from London. Only—I beg of you—don't buy stolen goods.

GOODY RICKBY. Stolen goods?

RACHEL. (*Aside to* RICHARD.) Don't! don't!

RICHARD. (*To* GOODY RICKBY.) Can you account for this mirror—how you came by it?

GOODY RICKBY. I'll show ye! I'll show ye! Stolen—ha!

RICHARD. Come, old swindler, keep your mirror, and give this lady back her money.

GOODY RICKBY. I'll damn ye both, I will!—Stolen!

RACHEL. (*Imploringly.*) Will you come?

RICHARD. Look you, old Rickby; this is not the first time. Charm all the broomsticks in town, if you like; bewitch all the tables and saucepans and mirrors you please; but gull no more money out of young girls. Mind you! We're not so enterprising in this town as at Salem; but—*it may come to it!* So look sharp! I'm not blind to what's going on here.

GOODY RICKBY. Not blind, Master Puritan? Oho! You can see through all my counterfeits, can ye? So! you would scrape all the wonder out'n the world, as I've scraped all the meat out'n my punkin-head yonder! Aha! wait and see! Afore sundown, I'll send ye a nut to crack, shall make your orthodox jaws ache. Your servant, Master Deuteronomy!

RICHARD. (*To* RACHEL, *who has seized his arm.*) We'll go.

(*Exeunt* RICHARD *and* RACHEL.)

GOODY RICKBY. (*Calls shrilly after them.*) Trot away, pretty team; toss your heads. I'll unhitch ye and take off your blinders.

THE SLOUCHING BOY. (*Capering and grimacing in front of the mirror, shrieks with laughter.*) Ohoho!

GOODY RICKBY. (*Returning, she mutters savagely.*) "Stolen goods!" (*Screams.*) Dickon! Stop laughing.

THE BOY. O Lord! O Lord!

GOODY RICKBY. What tickles thy mirth now?

THE BOY. For to think that the soul of an orphan innocent, what lives in a hayloft, should wear horns.

(*On looking into the mirror, the spectator perceives therein that the reflection of the slouching boy is the horned demon figure of* DICKON, *who performs the same antics in pantomime within the glass as the boy does without.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Yea; 'tis a wise devil that knows his own face in the glass. But hark now! thou must find me a rival for this cock-squire,—dost hear? A rival, that shall steal away the heart of his Mistress Rachel.

DICKON. And take her to church?

GOODY RICKBY. To church or to hell. All's one.

DICKON. A rival! (*Pointing at the glass.*) How would *he* serve—in there? Dear Ebenezer! Fancy the deacons in the vestry, Goody, and her uncle, the Justice, when they saw him escorting the bride to the altar, with his tail round her waist!

GOODY RICKBY. Tut, tut! Think it over in earnest, and meantime take her the glass. Wait, we'd best fold it up small, so as not to attract notice on the road. (DICKON, *who has already drawn the curtains over the glass, grasps one side of the large frame,* GOODY RICKBY *the other.*) Now! (*Pushing their shoulders against the two sides, the frame disappears and* DICKON *holds in his hand a mirror about a foot square, of the same design.*) So! Be off! And mind, a rival for Richard!

DICKON.

> For Richard a rival,
> Dear Goody Rickby
> Wants Dickon's connival:
> Lord! What can the trick be?

(*To the scarecrow.*) By-by, Sonny; take care of thy mother.

(DICKON *slouches out with the glass, whistling.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Mother! Yea, if only I had a son—the Justice Merton's and mine! If the brat had but lived now to remind him of those merry days, which

he has forgotten. Zooks, would n't I put a spoke in his wheel! But no such luck for me! No such luck!

(*As she goes to the forge, the stout figure of a man appears in the doorway behind her. Under one arm he carries a large book, in the other hand a gold-headed cane. He hesitates, embarrassed.*)

THE MAN. Permit me, madam.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Turning.*) Ah, him—Justice Merton!

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Removing his hat, steps over the sill, and lays his great book on the table; then with a supercilious look, he puts his hat firmly on again.*) Permit me, dame.

GOODY RICKBY. You!

(*With confused, affected hauteur, the* JUSTICE *shifts from foot to foot, flourishing his cane. As he speaks,* GOODY RICKBY, *with a shrewd, painful expression, draws slowly backward toward the door, left, which opens into an inner room. Reaching it, she opens it part way, stands facing him, and listens.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. I have had the honor—permit me—to entertain suspicions; to rise early, to follow my niece, to meet just now Squire Talbot; to hear his remarks concerning—hem!—you, dame! to call here—permit me—to express myself and inquire—

GOODY RICKBY. Concerning your waistcoat?

(*Turning quickly, she snatches an article of apparel which hangs on the inner side of the door, and holds it up.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Starting, crimson.*) Woman!

GOODY RICKBY. You left it behind—the last time.

JUSTICE MERTON. I have not the honor to remember—

GOODY RICKBY. The one I embroidered?

JUSTICE MERTON. 'T is a matter of—

GOODY RICKBY. Of some two-and-twenty years. (*Stretching out the narrow width of the waistcoat.*) Will you try it on now, dearie?

JUSTICE MERTON. Unconscionable! Un-un-unconscionable witch!

GOODY RICKBY. Witchling—thou used to say.

JUSTICE MERTON. Pah! pah! I forget myself. Pride, permit me, goeth before a fall. As a magistrate, Rickby, I have already borne with you long! The last straw, however, breaks the camel's back.

GOODY RICKBY. Poor camel!

JUSTICE MERTON. You have soiled, you have smirched, the virgin reputation of my niece. You have inveigled her into notions of witchcraft; already the neighbors are beginning to talk. 'T is a long lane which hath no turning, saith the Lord. Permit me—as a witch, thou art judged. Thou shalt hang.

A VOICE. (*Behind him.*) And me, too?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Turns about and stares.*) I beg pardon.

THE VOICE. (*In front of him.*) Not at all.

JUSTICE MERTON. Did—did somebody speak?

THE VOICE. Don't you recognize my voice? *Still and small,* you know. If you will kindly let me out, we can chat.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Turning fiercely on* GOODY RICKBY.) These are thy sorceries. But I fear them not. The righteous man walketh with God. (*Going to the book which lies on the table.*) Satan, I ban thee! I will read from the Holy Scriptures!

(*Unclasping the Bible, he flings open the ponderous covers.*—DICKON *steps forth in smoke.*)

DICKON. Thanks; it was stuffy in there.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Clasping his hands.*) Dickon!

DICKON. (*Moving a step nearer on the table.*) Hullo, Gilly! Hullo, Bess!

JUSTICE MERTON. Dickon! No! No!

DICKON. Do ye mind Auld Lang Syne—the chorus that night, Gilly? (*Sings.*)

> Gil-ead, Gil-ead, Gil-ead Merton,
> He was a silly head, silly head, Certain,
> When he forgot to steal a bed-Curtain.

Encore, now!

JUSTICE MERTON. No, no, be merciful! I will not harm her; she shall not hang; I swear it, I swear it! (DICKON *disappears.*) I swear—ah! Is he gone? Witchcraft! Witchcraft! I have witnesed it. 'T is proved on thee, slut. I swear it: thou shalt hang.

(*Exit wildly.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Ay, Gilead! I shall hang *on!* Ahaha! Dickon, thou angel! Ah, Satan! Satan! For a son now!

DICKON. (*Reappearing.*) *Videlicet,* in law—a bastard. *N' est ce pas?*

GOODY RICKBY. Yea, in law and in jus-

tice, I should 'a' had one now. Worse luck that he died.

DICKON. One-and-twenty years ago? (GOODY RICKBY *nods.*) Good; he should be of age now. One-and-twenty—a pretty age, too, for a rival. Haha!—For arrival?—Marry, he shall arrive, then; arrive and marry and inherit his patrimony—all on his birthday! Come, to work!

GOODY RICKBY. What rant is this?

DICKON. Yet, Dickon, it pains me to perform such an anachronism. All this mediævalism in Massachusetts!—These old-fashioned flames and alchemic accompaniments, when I 've tried so hard to be a native American product; it jars. But *che vuole!* I 'm naturally middle-aged. I have n't been really myself, let me think,—since 1492!

GOODY RICKBY. What art thou mooning about?

DICKON. (*Still impenetrable.*) There was my old friend in Germany, Dr. Johann Faustus; he was nigh such a bag of old rubbish when I made him over. Ain't it trite! No, you can't teach an old dog like me new tricks. Still, a scarecrow! that 's decidedly local color. Come, then; a Yankee masterpiece! (*Seizing* GOODY RICKBY *by the arm, and placing her before the scarecrow, he makes a bow and wave of introduction.*) Behold, madam, your son—illegitimate; the future affianced of Mistress Rachel Merton, the heir-elect, through matrimony, of Merton House,—Gilead Merton second: Lord Ravensbane! Your lordship—your mother.

GOODY RICKBY. Dickon! Can you do it?

DICKON. I can—try.

GOODY RICKBY. You will create him for me?—(*wickedly*)—and for Gilead!

DICKON. I will—for a kiss.

GOODY RICKBY. (*About to embrace him.*) Dickon!

DICKON. (*Dodging her.*) Later. Now, the waistcoat.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Handing it.*) Rare! Rare! He shall go wooing in 't—like his father.

DICKON. (*Shifting the scarecrow's gold-trimmed coat, slips on the embroidered waistcoat and replaces the coat.*) Stand still, Jack! So, my macaroni. *Perfecto!* Stay—a walking-stick!

GOODY RICKBY. (*Wrenching a spoke out of an old rickety wheel.*) Here: the spoke for Gilead. He used to take me to drive in the chaise it came out of.

DICKON. (*Placing the spoke as a cane, in the scarecrow's sleeve, views him with satisfaction.*) *Sic!* There, Jacky! *Filius fit non nascitur.*—Sam Hill! My Latin is stale. "In the beginning, was the—gourd!" Of these thy modest ingredients may thy spirit smack!

(*Making various mystic passes with his hands,* DICKON *intones, now deep and solemn, now with fanciful shrill rapidity, this incantation.*)

Flail, flip;
Broom, sweep;
Sic itur!
Cornstalk
And turnip, talk!
Turn crittur!

Pulse, beet;
Gourd, eat;
Ave Hellas!
Poker and punkin,
Stir the old junk in;
Breathe, bellows!

Corn-cob,
And crow's feather,
End the job;
Jumble the rest o' the rubbish together;
Dovetail and tune 'em.
E pluribus unum!

(*The scarecrow remains stock still.*) The devil! Have I lost the hang of it? Ah! Hullo! He 's dropped his pipe. What 's a dandy without his 'bacey! (*Picking up the pipe, he shows it to* GOODY RICKBY, *pointing into the pipe-bowl.*) 'T is my own brand, Goody: brimstone. Without it he 'd be naught but a scarecrow. (*Restoring the corn-cob pipe to the scarecrow's mouth.*) 'T is the life and breath of him. So; hand me yon hazel switch, Goody. (*Waving it.*) Presto!

Brighten, coal,
I' the dusk between us!
Whiten, soul!
Propinquat Venus!

(*A whiff of smoke puffs from the scarecrow's pipe.*)

Sic! Sic! Jacobus! (*Another whiff.*) Bravo!

(*The whiffs grow more rapid and the thing trembles.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Puff! puff, manny, for thy life!

DICKON. *Fiat, fœtus!*—Huzza! *Noch einmal!* Go it!

(*Clouds of smoke issue from the pipe, half fill the shop, and envelop the creature, who staggers.*[1])

GOODY RICKBY. See! See his eyes!

DICKON. (*Beckoning with one finger.*) *Veni fili! Veni!* Take 'ee first step, *bambino!*—Toddle!

(*The* SCARECROW *makes a stiff lurch forward and falls sidewise against the anvil, propped half-reclining against which he leans rigid, emitting fainter puffs of smoke in gasps.*)

GOODY RICKBY. (*Screams.*) Have a care! He 's fallen.

DICKON. Well done, Punkin Jack! Thou shalt be knighted for that! (*Striking him on the shoulder with the hazel rod.*) Rise, Lord Ravensbane!

(*The* SCARECROW *totters to his feet, and makes a forlorn rectilinear salutation.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Look! He bows.—He flaps his flails at thee. He smiles like a tik-doo-loo-roo!

DICKON. (*With a profound reverence, backing away.*) Will his lordship deign to follow his tutor?

(*With hitches and jerks, the* SCARECROW *follows* DICKON.)

GOODY RICKBY. O Lord! Lord! the style o' the broomstick!

DICKON. (*Holding ready a high-backed chair.*) Will his lordship be seated and rest himself? (*Awkwardly the* SCARECROW *half falls into the chair; his head sinks sideways, and his pipe falls out.* DICKON *snatches it up instantly and restores it to his mouth.*) Puff! Puff, *puer;* 't is thy life. (*The* SCARECROW *puffs again.*) Is his lordship's tobacco refreshing?

GOODY RICKBY. Look now! The red color in his cheeks. The beet-juice is pumping, oho!

DICKON. (*Offering his arm.*) Your lordship will deign to receive an audience? (*The* SCARECROW *takes his arm and rises.*) The Marchioness of Rickby, your lady mother, entreats leave to present herself.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Curtsying low.*) My son!

[1] At Dickon's words, "Come to work!" on p. 855 the living actor, concealed by the smoke, and disguised, has substituted himself for the elegantly clad effigy. His make-up, of course, approximates to the latter, but the grotesque contours of his expression gradually, throughout the remainder of the act, become refined and sublimated till, at the *finale*, they are of a lordly and distinguished caste.

DICKON. (*Holding the pipe, and waving the hazel rod.*) *Dicite!* Speak! (*The* SCARECROW, *blowing out his last mouthful of smoke, opens his mouth, gasps, gurgles, and is silent.*) *In principio erat verbum!* Accost thy mother!

(*The* SCARECROW, *clutching at his side in a struggle for coherence, fixes a pathetic look of pain on* GOODY RICKBY.)

THE SCARECROW. Mother!

GOODY RICKBY. (*With a scream of hysterical laughter, seizes both* DICKON'S *hands and dances him about the forge.*) O, Beelzebub! I shall die!

DICKON. Thou hast thy son.

(DICKON *whispers in the* SCARECROW'S *ear, shakes his finger, and exit.*)

GOODY RICKBY. He called me "mother." Again, boy, again.

THE SCARECROW. From the bottom of my heart—mother.

GOODY RICKBY. "The bottom of his heart"! —Nay, thou killest me.

THE SCARECROW. Permit me, madam!

GOODY RICKBY. Gilead! Gilead himself! Waistcoat, "permit me," and all: thy father over again, I tell thee.

THE SCARECROW. (*With a slight stammer.*) It gives me—I assure you—lady —the deepest happiness.

GOODY RICKBY. Just so the old hypocrite spoke when I said I 'd have him. But thou hast a sweeter deference, my son.

(*Reënter* DICKON; *he is dressed all in black, save for a white stock—a suit of plain elegance.*)

DICKON. Now, my lord, your tutor is ready.

THE SCARECROW. (*To* GOODY RICKBY.) I have the honor—permit me—to wish you—good-morning.

(*Bows and takes a step after* DICKON, *who, taking a three-cornered cocked hat from a peg, goes toward the door.*)

GOODY RICKBY. Whoa! Whoa, Jack! Whither away?

DICKON. (*Presenting the hat.*) Deign to reply, sir.

THE SCARECROW. I go—with my tutor—Master Dickonson—to pay my respects—to his worship—the Justice—Merton—to solicit—the hand—of his daughter—the fair Mistress—Rachel. (*With another bow.*) Permit me.

GOODY RICKBY. Permit ye? God speed

ye! Thou must teach him his tricks, Dickon.

DICKON. Trust me, Goody. Between here and Justice Merton's, I will play the mother-hen, and I promise thee, our bantling shall be as stuffed with compliments as a callow chick with caterpillars. (*As he throws open the big doors, the cawing of crows is heard again.*) Hark! your lordship's retainers acclaim you on your birthday. They bid you welcome to your majority. Listen! "Long live Lord Ravensbane! Caw!"

GOODY RICKBY. Look! Count 'em, Dickon.

One for sorrow,
Two for mirth,
Three for a wedding,
Four for a birth—

Four on 'em! So! Good luck on thy birthday! And see! There's three on 'em flying into the Justice's field.

—Flight o' the crows
Tells how the wind blows!—

A wedding! Get thee gone. Wed the girl, and sting the Justice. Bless ye, my son!

THE SCARECROW. (*With a profound reverence.*) Mother—believe me—to be—your ladyship's—most devoted—and obedient—son.

DICKON. (*Prompting him aloud.*) Ravensbane.

THE SCARECROW. (*Donning his hat, lifts his head in hauteur, shakes his lace ruffle over his hand, turns his shoulder, nods slightly, and speaks for the first time with complete mastery of his voice.*) Hm! Ravensbane!

(*With one hand in the arm of* DICKON, *the other twirling his cane* (*the converted chaise-spoke*), *wreathed in halos of smoke from his pipe, the fantastical figure hitches elegantly forth into the daylight, amid louder acclamations of the crows.*)

ACT SECOND.

The same morning. JUSTICE MERTON'S *parlor, furnished and designed in the style of the early colonial period. On the right wall hangs a portrait of the* JUSTICE *as a young man; on the left wall, an old-fashioned looking-glass. At the right of the room stands the Glass of Truth, draped—as in the blacksmith shop*

—*with the strange, embroidered curtain. In front of it are discovered* RACHEL *and* RICHARD; RACHEL *is about to draw the curtain.*

RACHEL. Now! Are you willing?

RICHARD. So you suspect me of dark, villainous practices?

RACHEL. No, no, foolish Dick.

RICHARD. Still, I am to be tested; is that it?

RACHEL. That's it.

RICHARD. As your true lover.

RACHEL. Well, yes.

RICHARD. Why, of course, then, I consent. A true lover always consents to the follies of his lady-love.

RACHEL. Thank you, Dick; I trust the glass will sustain your character. Now; when I draw the curtain—

RICHARD. (*Staying her hand.*) What if I be false?

RACHEL. Then, sir, the glass will reflect you as the subtle fox that you are.

RICHARD. And you—as the goose?

RACHEL. Very likely. Ah! but, Richard, dear, we must n't laugh. It may prove very serious. You do not guess—you do not dream all the mysteries—

RICHARD. (*Shaking his head, with a grave smile.*) You pluck at too many mysteries. Remember our first mother Eve!

RACHEL. But this is the glass of truth; and Goody Rickby told me—

RICHARD. Rickby, forsooth!

RACHEL. Nay, come; let's have it over. (*She draws the curtain, covers her eyes, steps back by* RICHARD'S *side, looks at the glass, and gives a joyous cry.*) Ah! there you are, dear! There we are, both of us—just as we have always seemed to each other, true. 'T is proved. Is n't it wonderful?

RICHARD. Miraculous! That a mirror bought in a blacksmith shop, before sunrise, for twenty pounds, should prove to be actually—a mirror!

RACHEL. Richard, I 'm so happy.

(*Enter* JUSTICE MERTON *and* MISTRESS MERTON.)

RICHARD. (*Embracing her.*) Happy, art thou, sweet goose? Why, then, God bless Goody Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON. Strange words from you, Squire Talbot.

(RACHEL *and* RICHARD *part quickly;* RACHEL *draws the curtain over the mirror;* RICHARD *stands stiffly.*)

RICHARD. Justice Merton! Why, sir, the old witch is more innocent, perhaps, than I represented her.

JUSTICE MERTON. A witch, believe me, is never innocent. (*Taking their hands, he brings them together and kisses* RACHEL *on the forehead.*) Permit me, young lovers. I was once young myself, young and amorous.

MISTRESS MERTON. (*In a low voice.*) Verily!

JUSTICE MERTON. My fair niece, my worthy young man, beware of witchcraft.

MISTRESS MERTON. And Goody Rickby, too, brother?

JUSTICE MERTON. That woman shall answer for her deeds. She is proscribed.

RACHEL. Proscribed? What is that?

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Examining the mirror.*) What is this?

JUSTICE MERTON. She shall hang.

RACHEL. Uncle, no! Not merely because of my purchase this morning?

JUSTICE MERTON. Your purchase?

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Pointing to the mirror.*) That, I suppose.

JUSTICE MERTON. What! you purchased that mirror of her? You brought it here?

RACHEL. No, the boy brought it; I found it here when I returned.

JUSTICE MERTON. What! From her shop? From her infamous den, into my parlor! (*To* MISTRESS MERTON.) Call the servant. (*Himself calling.*) Micah! Away with it! Micah!

RACHEL. Uncle Gilead, I bought—

JUSTICE MERTON. Micah, I say! Where is the man?

RACHEL. Listen, uncle. I bought it with my own money.

JUSTICE MERTON. Thine own money! Wilt have the neighbors gossip? Wilt have me, thyself, my house, suspected of complicity with witches?

(*Enter* MICAH.)

Micah, take this away.

MICAH. Yes, sir; but, sir—

JUSTICE MERTON. Out of my house!

MICAH. There be visitors.

JUSTICE MERTON. Away with—

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Touching his arm.*) Gilead!

MICAH. Visitors, sir; gentry.

JUSTICE MERTON. Ah!

MICAH. Shall I show them in, sir?

JUSTICE MERTON. Visitors! In the morning? Who are they?

MICAH. Strangers, sir. I should judge they be very high gentry; lords, sir.

ALL. Lords!

MICAH. At least, one on 'em, sir. The other—the dark gentleman—told me they left their horses at the inn, sir.

MISTRESS MERTON. Hark! (*The faces of all wear suddenly a startled expression.*) Where is that unearthly sound?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Listening.*) Is it in the cellar?

MICAH. 'T is just the dog howling, madam. When he spied the gentry he turned tail and run below.

MISTRESS MERTON. Oh, the dog!

JUSTICE MERTON. Show the gentlemen here, Micah. Don't keep them waiting. A lord! (*To* RACHEL.) We shall talk of this matter later.—A lord!

(*Turning to the small glass on the wall, he arranges his peruke and attire.*)

RACHEL. (*To* RICHARD.) What a fortunate interruption! But, dear Dick! I wish we need n't meet these strangers now.

RICHARD. Would you really rather we were alone together?

(*They chat aside, absorbed in each other.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. Think of it, Cynthia, a lord!

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Dusting the furniture hastily with her handkerchief.*) And such dust!

RACHEL. (*To* RICHARD.) You know, dear, we need only be introduced, and then we can steal away together.

(*Reënter* MICAH.)

MICAH. (*Announcing.*) Lord Ravensbane: Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova; Master Dickonson.

(*Enter* RAVENSBANE *and* DICKON.)

JUSTICE MERTON. Gentlemen, permit me you are excessively welcome. I am deeply gratified to meet—

DICKON. Lord Ravensbane, of the Rookeries, Somersetshire.

JUSTICE MERTON. Lord Ravensbane—his lordship's most truly honored.

RAVENSBANE. Truly honored.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Turning to* DICKON.) His lordship's—?

DICKON. Tutor.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Checking his effusiveness.*) Ah, so!

DICKON. Justice Merton, I believe.

JUSTICE MERTON. Of Merton House.—May I present—permit me, your lordship—my sister, Mistress Merton.

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Merton.

JUSTICE MERTON. And my—and my—(*under his breath*)—Rachel! (RACHEL *remains with a bored expression behind* RICHARD.)—My young neighbor, Squire Talbot, Squire Richard Talbot of—of—

RICHARD. Of nowhere, sir.

RAVENSBANE. (*Nods.*) Nowhere.

JUSTICE MERTON. And permit me, Lord Ravensbane, my niece—Mistress Rachel Merton.

RAVENSBANE. (*Bows low.*) Mistress Rachel Merton.

RACHEL. (*Curtsies.*) Lord Ravensbane.

(*As they raise their heads, their eyes meet and are fascinated.* DICKON *just then takes* RAVENSBANE'S *pipe and fills it.*)

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel!

RACHEL. Your lordship!

(DICKON *returns the pipe.*)

MISTRESS MERTON. A pipe! Gilead!—in the parlor!

(JUSTICE MERTON *frowns silence.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. Your lordship—ahem!—has just arrived in town?

DICKON. From London, via New Amsterdam.

RICHARD. (*Aside.*) Is he staring at *you?* Are you ill, Rachel?

RACHEL. (*Indifferently.*) What?

JUSTICE MERTON. Lord Ravensbane honors my humble roof.

DICKON. (*Touches* RAVENSBANE'S *arm.*) Your lordship—"roof."

RAVENSBANE. (*Starting, turns to* MERTON.) Nay, sir, the roof of my father's oldest friend bestows generous hospitality upon his only son.

JUSTICE MERTON. Only son—ah, yes! Your father—

RAVENSBANE. My father, I trust, sir, has never forgotten the intimate companionship, the touching devotion, the unceasing solicitude for his happiness which you, sir, manifested to him in the days of his youth.

JUSTICE MERTON. Really, your lordship, the—the slight favors which—hem! some years ago, I was privileged to show your illustrious father—

RAVENSBANE. Permit me!—Because, however, of his present infirmities—for I regret to say that my father is suffering a temporary aberration of mind—

JUSTICE MERTON. You distress me!

RAVENSBANE. My lady mother has charged me with a double mission here in New England. On my quitting my home, sir, to explore the wideness and the mystery of this world, my mother bade me be sure to call upon his worship, the Justice Merton; and deliver to him, first, my father's remembrances; and secondly, my mother's epistle.

DICKON. (*Handing to* JUSTICE MERTON *a sealed document.*) Her ladyship's letter, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Examining the seal with awe, speaks aside to* MISTRESS MERTON.) Cynthia!—a crested seal!

DICKON. His lordship's crest, sir: rooks rampant.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Embarrassed, breaks the seal.*) Permit me.

RACHEL. (*Looking at* RAVENSBANE.) Have you noticed his bearing, Richard: what personal distinction! what inbred nobility! Every inch a true lord!

RICHARD. He may be a lord, my dear, but he walks like a broomstick.

RACHEL. How dare you!

(*Turns abruptly away; as she does so, a fold of her gown catches in a chair.*)

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel—permit me.

(*Stooping, he extricates the fold of her gown.*)

RACHEL. Oh, thank you.

(*They go aside together.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* DICKON, *glancing up from the letter.*) I am astonished—overpowered!

RICHARD. (*To* MISTRESS MERTON.) So Lord Ravensbane and his family are old friends of yours?

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Monosyllabically.*) I never heard the name before, Richard.

RAVENSBANE. (*To* RACHEL, *taking her hand after a whisper from* DICKON.) Believe me, sweet lady, it will give me the deepest pleasure.

RACHEL. Can you really tell fortunes?

RAVENSBANE. More than that; I can bestow them.

(RAVENSBANE *leads* RACHEL *off, left, into an adjoining room, the door of which remains open.* RICHARD *follows them.* MISTRESS MERTON *follows him, murmuring, "Richard!"* DICKON *stands where he can watch*

them in the room off scene, while he speaks to the JUSTICE.)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* DICKON, *glancing up from the letter.*) I am astonished—overpowered! But is her ladyship really serious? An offer of marriage!

DICKON. Pray read it again, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Reads.*) "To the Worshipful, the Justice Gilead Merton, Merton House.

"My Honorable Friend and Benefactor:

"With these brief lines I commend to you our son"—*our* son!

DICKON. She speaks likewise for his young lordship's father, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON. Ah! of course. (*Reads.*) "In a strange land, I entrust him to you as to a father." Honored, believe me! "I have only to add my earnest hope that the natural gifts, graces, and inherited fortune"—ah—!

DICKON. Twenty thousand pounds—on his father's demise.

JUSTICE MERTON. Ah!—"fortune of this young scion of nobility will so propitiate the heart of your niece, Mistress Rachel Merton, as to cause her to accept his proffered hand in matrimony";—but—but—but Squire Talbot is betrothed to—well, well, we shall see;—"in matrimony, and thus cement the early bonds of interest and affection between your honored self and his lordship's father; not to mention, dear sir, your worship's ever grateful and obedient admirer,

"ELIZABETH,

"Marchioness of R."

Of R.! of R.! Will you believe me, my dear sir, so long is it since my travels in England—I visited at so many—hem! noble estates—permit me, it is so awkward, but—

DICKON. (*With his peculiar intonation of Act First.*) Not at all.

RAVENSBANE. (*Calls from the adjoining room.*) Dickon, my pipe!

(DICKON *glides away.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Starting in perturbation. To* DICKON.) Permit me, one moment; I did not catch your name.

DICKON. My name? Dickonson.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*With a gasp of relief.*) Ah, Dickonson! Thank you, I mistook the word.

DICKON. A compound, your worship. (*With a malignant smile.*) Dickon-(*then, jerking his thumb toward the next room*) son! (*Bowing.*) Both at your service.

JUSTICE MERTON. Is he—he there?

DICKON. Bessie's brat; yes; it did n't die, after all, poor suckling! Dickon weaned it. Saved it for balm of Gilead. Raised it for joyful home-coming. Prodigal's return! Twenty-first birthday! Happy son! Happy father!

JUSTICE MERTON. My—son!

DICKON. Felicitations!

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Faintly.*) What—what do you want?

DICKON. Only the happiness of your dear ones—the union of these young hearts and hands.

JUSTICE MERTON. What! he will dare—an illegitimate—

DICKON. Fie, fie, Gilly! Why, the brat is a lord now.

JUSTICE MERTON. Oh, the disgrace! Spare me that, Dickon. And she is innocent; she is already betrothed.

DICKON. Twiddle-twaddle! 'T is a brilliant match; besides, her ladyship's heart is set upon it.

JUSTICE MERTON. Her ladyship—?

DICKON. The Marchioness of Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Glowering.*) Rickby! —I had forgotten.

DICKON. Her ladyship has never forgotten. So, you see, your worship's alternatives are most simple. Alternative one: advance his lordship's suit with your niece as speedily as possible, and save all scandal. Alternative two: impede his lordship's suit, and—

JUSTICE MERTON. Don't, Dickon! don't reveal the truth; not disgrace now!

DICKON. Good; we are agreed, then?

JUSTICE MERTON. I have no choice.

DICKON. (*Cheerfully.*) Why, true; we ignored that, did n't we?

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Reëntering.*) This young lord—Why, Gilead, are you ill?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*With a great effort commands himself.*) Not in the least.

MISTRESS MERTON. Rachel's deportment my dear brother—I tell you, they are fortune-telling!

JUSTICE MERTON. Tush! Tush!

MISTRESS MERTON. Tush? "Tush" to me? Tush! (*She goes out right.*)

(RAVENSBANE *and* RACHEL *reënter from the adjoining room, followed shortly by* RICHARD.)

RACHEL. I am really at a loss. Your lordship's hand is so very peculiar.

RAVENSBANE. Ah! Peculiar.

RACHEL. This, now, is the line of life.

RAVENSBANE. Of life, yes?
RACHEL. But it begins so abruptly, and see! it breaks off and ends nowhere. And just so here with this line—the line of—of love.
RAVENSBANE. Of love. So; it breaks?
RACHEL. Yes.
RAVENSBANE. Ah, then, that must be the *heart* line.
RACHEL. Why, Lord Ravensbane, your pulse. Really, if I am cruel, you are quite heartless. I declare I can't feel your heart beat at all.
RAVENSBANE. Ah, mistress, that is because I have just lost it.
RACHEL. (*Archly.*) Where?
RAVENSBANE. (*Faintly.*) Dickon, my pipe!
RACHEL. Alas! my lord, are you ill?
DICKON. (*Restoring the lighted pipe to* RAVENSBANE, *speaks aside.*) Pardon me, sweet young lady, I must confide to you that his lordship's heart is peculiarly responsive to his emotions. When he feels very ardently, it quite stops. Hence the use of his pipe.
RACHEL. Oh! Is smoking, then, necessary for his heart?
DICKON. Absolutely—to equilibrate the valvular palpitations. Without his pipe—should his lordship experience, for instance, the emotion of love—he might die.
RACHEL. You alarm me!
DICKON. But this is for you only, Mistress Rachel. We may confide in you?
RACHEL. Oh, utterly, sir.
DICKON. His lordship, you know, is so sensitive.
RAVENSBANE. (*To* RACHEL.) You have given it back to me. Why did not you keep it?
RACHEL. What, my lord?
RAVENSBANE. My heart.
RICHARD. Intolerable! Do you approve of *this,* sir? Are Lord Ravensbane's credentials satisfactory?
JUSTICE MERTON. Eminently, eminently.
RICHARD. Ah! So her ladyship's letter is—
JUSTICE MERTON. Charming; charming. (*To* RAVENSBANE.) Your lordship will, I trust, make my house your home.
RAVENSBANE. My home, sir.
RACHEL. (*To* DICKON, *who has spoken to her.*) Really? (*To* JUSTICE MERTON.) Why, uncle, what is this Master Dickonson tells us?
JUSTICE MERTON. What! What! he has revealed—
RACHEL. Yes, indeed.
JUSTICE MERTON. Rachel! Rachel!
RACHEL. (*Laughingly to* RAVENSBANE.) My uncle is doubtless astonished to find you so grown.
RAVENSBANE. (*Laughingly to* JUSTICE MERTON.) I am doubtless astonished, sir, to be so grown.
JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* DICKON.) You have—
DICKON. Merely remarked, sir, that your worship had often dandled his lordship—as an infant.
JUSTICE MERTON. (*Smiling lugubriously.*) Quite so—as an infant merely.
RACHEL. How interesting! Then you must have seen his lordship's home in England.
JUSTICE MERTON. As you say.
RACHEL. (*To* RAVENSBANE.) Do describe it to us. We are so isolated here from the grand world. Do you know, I always imagine England to be an enchanted isle, like one of the old Hesperides, teeming with fruits of solid gold.
RAVENSBANE. Ah, yes! my mother raises them.
RACHEL. Fruits of gold?
RAVENSBANE. Round like the rising sun. She calls them—ah! punkins.
MISTRESS MERTON. "Punkins"!
JUSTICE MERTON. (*Aside, grinding his teeth.*) Scoundrel! Scoundrel!
RACHEL. (*Laughing.*) Your lordship pokes fun at us.
DICKON. His lordship is an artist in words, mistress. I have noticed that in whatever country he is traveling, he tinges his vocabulary with the local idiom. His lordship means, of course, not pumpkins, but pomegranates.
RACHEL. We forgive him. But, your lordship, please be serious and describe to us your hall.
RAVENSBANE. Quite serious: the hall. Yes, yes; in the middle burns a great fire—on a black—ah! black altar.
DICKON. A Druidical heirloom. His lordship's mother collects antiques.
RACHEL. How fascinating!
RAVENSBANE. Fascinating! On the walls hang pieces of iron.
DICKON. Trophies of Saxon warfare.
RAVENSBANE. And rusty horseshoes.
GENERAL MURMURS. Horseshoes!
DICKON. Presents from the German Em-

peror. They were worn by the steeds of Charlemagne.

RAVENSBANE. Quite so; and broken cart-wheels.

DICKON. Relics of British chariots.

RACHEL. How mediæval it must be! (*To* JUSTICE MERTON.) And to think you never described it to us!

MISTRESS MERTON. True, brother; you have been singularly reticent.

JUSTICE MERTON. Permit me; it is impossible to report all one sees on one's travels.

MISTRESS MERTON. Evidently.

RACHEL. But surely your lordship's mother has other diversions besides collecting antiques. I have heard that in England ladies followed the hounds; and sometimes—(*looking at her aunt and lowering her voice*)—they even dance.

RAVENSBANE. Dance—ah, yes; my lady mother dances about the—the altar; she swings high a hammer.

DICKON. Your lordship, your lordship! Pray, sir, check this vein of poetry. Lord Ravensbane symbolizes as a hammer and altar a golf-stick and tee—a Scottish game, which her ladyship plays on her Highland estates.

RICHARD. (*To* MISTRESS MERTON.) What do you think of this?

MISTRESS MERTON. (*With a scandalized look toward her brother.*) He said to me "tush."

RICHARD. (*To* JUSTICE MERTON, *indicating* DICKON.) Who is this magpie?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Hisses in fury.*) Satan!

RICHARD. I beg pardon!

JUSTICE MERTON. Satan, sir,—makes you jealous.

RICHARD. (*Bows stiffly.*) Good-morning. (*Walking up to* RAVENSBANE.) Lord Ravensbane, I have a rustic colonial question to ask. Is it the latest fashion to smoke incessantly in ladies' parlors, or is it—mediæval?

DICKON. His lordship's health, sir, necessitates—

RICHARD. I addressed his lordship.

RAVENSBANE. In the matter of fashions, sir— (*Hands his pipe to be refilled.*) My pipe, Dickon!

(*While* DICKON *holds his pipe—somewhat longer than usual*—RAVENSBANE, *with his mouth open as if about to speak, relapses into a vacant stare.*)

RICHARD. Well?

DICKON. (*As he lights the pipe for* RAVENSBANE, *speaks suavely and low as if not to be overheard by him.*) Pardon me. The fact is, my young pupil is sensitive; the wound from his latest duel is not quite healed; you observe a slight lameness, an occasional—absence of mind.

RACHEL. A wound—in a real duel?

DICKON. (*Aside.*) You, mistress, know the *true* reason—his lordship's heart.

RICHARD. (*To* RAVENSBANE, *who is still staring vacantly into space.*) Well, well, your lordship. (RAVENSBANE *pays no attention.*) You were saying—? (DICKON *returns the pipe*)—in the matter of fashions, sir—?

RAVENSBANE. (*Regaining slowly a look of intelligence, draws himself up with affronted hauteur.*) Permit me! (*Puffs several wreaths of smoke into the air.*) I *am* the fashions.

RICHARD. (*Going.*) Insufferable!

(*He pauses at the door.*)

MISTRESS MERTON. (*To* JUSTICE MERTON.) Well—what do you think of that?

JUSTICE MERTON. Spoken like King Charles himself.

MISTRESS MERTON. Brother! brother! is there nothing wrong here?

(*Going out, she passes* DICKON, *starts at a look which he gives her, and goes out, right, flustered. Following her,* JUSTICE MERTON *is stopped by* DICKON, *and led off left by him.*)

RACHEL. (*To* RAVENSBANE.) I—object to the smoke? Why, I think it is charming.

RICHARD. (*Who has returned from the door, speaks in a low, constrained voice.*) Rachel!

RACHEL. Oh!—you?

RICHARD. You take quickly to European fashions.

RACHEL. Yes? To what one in particular?

RICHARD. Two; smoking and flirtation.

RACHEL. Jealous?

RICHARD. Of an idiot? I hope not. Manners differ, however. Your confidences to his lordship have evidently not included—your relation to me.

RACHEL. Oh, our relations!

RICHARD. Of course, since you wish him to continue in ignorance—

RACHEL. Not at all. He shall know at once. Lord Ravensbane!

RAVENSBANE. Fair mistress!

RICHARD. Rachel, stop! I did not mean—

RACHEL. (*To* RAVENSBANE.) My uncle did not introduce to you with sufficient elaboration this gentleman. Will you allow me to do so now?

RAVENSBANE. I adore Mistress Rachel's elaborations.

RACHEL. Lord Ravensbane, I beg to present Squire Talbot, *my betrothed.*

RAVENSBANE. Betrothed! Is it—(*noticing* RICHARD'S *frown*)—is it pleasant?

RACHEL. (*To* RICHARD.) Are you satisfied?

RICHARD. (*Trembling with feeling.*) *More* than satisfied. (*Exit.*)

RAVENSBANE. (*Looking after him.*) Ah! Betrothed is *not* pleasant.

RACHEL. Not always.

RAVENSBANE. (*Anxiously.*) Mistress Rachel is not pleased?

RACHEL. (*Biting her lip, looks after* RICHARD.) With him.

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel will smile again?

RACHEL. Soon.

RAVENSBANE. (*Ardent.*) Ah! What can Lord Ravensbane do to make her smile? See! will you puff my pipe? It is very pleasant. (*Offering the pipe.*)

RACHEL. (*Smiling.*) Shall I try?
(*Takes hold of it mischievously.*)

(*Enter* JUSTICE MERTON *and* DICKON, left.)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*In a great voice.*) Rachel!

RACHEL. Why, uncle!

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Speaks suavely to* RAVENSBANE.) Permit me, your lordship—Rachel, you will kindly withdraw for a few moments; I desire to confer with Lord Ravensbane concerning his mother's—her ladyship's letter—(*obsequiously to* DICKON)—that is, if you think, sir, that your noble pupil is not too fatigued.

DICKON. Not at all; I think his lordship will listen to you with much pleasure.

RAVENSBANE. (*Bowing to* JUSTICE MERTON, *but looking at* RACHEL.) With much pleasure.

DICKON. And in the mean time, if Mistress Rachel will allow me, I will assist her in writing those invitations which your worship desires to send in her name.

JUSTICE MERTON. Invitations—from my niece?

DICKON. To his Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor; to your friends, the Reverend Masters at Harvard College, etc., etc.; in brief, to all your worship's select social acquaintance in the vicinity—to meet his lordship. It was so thoughtful in you to suggest it, sir, and believe me, his lordship appreciates your courtesy in arranging the reception in his honor for this afternoon.

RACHEL. (*To* JUSTICE MERTON.) This afternoon! Are we really to give his lordship a reception? And will it be here, uncle?

DICKON. (*Looking at him narrowly.*) Your worship said here, I believe?

JUSTICE MERTON. Quite so, sir; quite so, quite so.

DICKON. Permit me to act as your scribe, Mistress Rachel.

RACHEL. With pleasure. (*With a curtsy to* RAVENSBANE.) Till we meet again!
(*Exit, right.*)

DICKON. (*Aside to* JUSTICE MERTON.) I advise nothing rash, Gilly; the brat has a weak heart. (*Aside, as he passes* RAVENSBANE.) Remember, Jack! Puff! Puff!

RAVENSBANE. (*Staring at the door.*) She is gone.

JUSTICE MERTON. Impostor! You, at least, shall not play the lord and master to my face.

RAVENSBANE. Quite—gone!

JUSTICE MERTON. I know with whom I have to deal. If I be any judge of my own flesh and blood—permit me—you shall quail before me.

RAVENSBANE. (*Dejectedly.*) She did not smile—(*Joyously.*) She smiled!

JUSTICE MERTON. Affected rogue! I know thee. I know thy feigned pauses, thy assumed vagaries. Speak; how much do you want?

RAVENSBANE. (*Ecstatically.*) Ah! Mistress Rachel!

JUSTICE MERTON. Her! Scoundrel, if thou dost name her again, my innocent—my sweet maid! If thou dost—thou godless spawn of temptation—mark you, I will put an end—
(*Reaching for a pistol that rests in a rack on the wall,—the intervening form of* DICKON *suddenly appears, pockets the pistol, and exit.*)

DICKON. I beg pardon; I forgot something.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Sinking into a chair.*) God, Thou art just!
(*He holds his head in his hands and weeps.*)

RAVENSBANE. (*For the first time, since*

RACHEL'S *departure, observing* MERTON.) Permit me, sir, are you ill?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Recoiling.*) What art thou!

RAVENSBANE. (*Monotonously.*) I am Lord Ravensbane: Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and—(*As* JUSTICE MERTON *covers his face again.*) Shall I call Dickon? (*Walking quickly toward the door, calls.*) Dickon!

JUSTICE MERTON (*Starting up.*) No, do not call him. Tell me: I hate thee not; thou wast innocent. Tell me!—I thought thou hadst died as a babe.—Where has Dickon, our tyrant, kept thee these twenty years?

RAVENSBANE. (*With gentle courtesy.*) Master Dickonson is my tutor.

JUSTICE MERTON. And why has thy mother—Ah, I know well; I deserve all. But yet, it must not be published now! I am a justice now, an honored citizen—and my young niece—Thy mother will not demand so much.

RAVENSBANE. My mother is the Marchioness of Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON. Yes, yes; 't was well planned, a clever trick. 'T was skillful of her. But surely thy mother gave thee commands to—

RAVENSBANE. My mother gave me her blessing.

JUSTICE MERTON. Ah, 't is well, then. Young man, my son, I too will give thee my blessing, if thou wilt but go—go instantly—go with half my fortune—but leave me my honor—and my Rachel?

RAVENSBANE. Rachel? Rachel is yours? No, no, Mistress Rachel is mine. We are ours.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Pleadingly.*) Consider the disgrace—you, an illegitimate—and she—oh, think what thou art!

RAVENSBANE. (*Monotonously, puffing smoke at the end.*) I am Lord Ravensbane: Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count—

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Wrenching the pipe from* RAVENSBANE'S *hand and lips.*) Devil's child! Boor! Buffoon! (*Flinging the pipe away.*) I will stand thy insults no longer. If thou hast no heart—

RAVENSBANE. (*Putting his hand to his side, staggers.*) Ah! my heart!

JUSTICE MERTON. Hypocrite! Thou canst not fool me. I am thy father.

RAVENSBANE. (*Faintly, stretches out his hand to him for support.*) Father!

JUSTICE MERTON. Stand away. Thou mayst break thy heart and mine and the devil's, but thou shalt not break Rachel's.

RAVENSBANE. (*Faintly.*) Mistress Rachel is mine— (*He staggers again, and falls, half reclining, upon a chair. More faintly he speaks, beginning to change expression.*) Her eyes are mine; her smiles are mine.

(*His eyes close.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. Good God! Can it be—his heart? (*With agitated swiftness he feels and listens at* RAVENSBANE'S *side.*) Not a motion; not a sound. Yea, God, Thou art good! 'T is his heart. He is—ah! he is my son. Judge Almighty, if he should die now; may I not be still a moment more and make sure? No, no, my son—he is changing. (*Calls.*) Help! Help! Rachel! Master Dickonson! Help! Richard! Cynthia! Come hither!

(*Enter* DICKON *and* RACHEL.)

RACHEL. Uncle!

JUSTICE MERTON. Bring wine. Lord Ravensbane has fainted.

RACHEL. Oh! (*Turning swiftly to go.*) Micah, wine.

DICKON. (*Detaining her.*) Stay! His pipe! Where is his lordship's pipe?

RACHEL. Oh, terrible!

(*Enter, at different doors,* MISTRESS MERTON *and* RICHARD.)

MISTRESS MERTON. What 's the matter?

JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* RACHEL.) He threw it away. He is worse. Bring the wine.

MISTRESS MERTON. Look! How strange he appears!

RACHEL. (*Searching distractedly.*) The pipe! His lordship's pipe! It is lost, Master Dickonson.

DICKON. (*Stooping, as if searching, with his back turned, having picked up the pipe, is filling and lighting it.*) It must be found. This is a heart attack, my friends; his lordship's life depends on the nicotine.

(*Deftly he places the pipe in* RACHEL'S *way.*)

RACHEL. Thank God! Here it is. (*Carrying it to the prostrate form of* RAVENS

BANE, *she lifts his head and is about to put the pipe in his mouth.*) Shall I—shall I put it in?

ICHARD. No! not you.

ACHEL. Sir!

ICHARD. Let his tutor perform that office.

ACHEL. (*Lifting* LORD RAVENSBANE'S *head again.*) My lord!

ICHARD *and* JUSTICE MERTON. (*Together.*) Rachel!

ICKON. Pardon me, Mistress Rachel; give the pipe at once. Only a token of true affection can revive his lordship now.

ICHARD. (*As* RACHEL *puts the pipe to* RAVENSBANE'S lips.) I forbid it, Rachel.

ACHEL. (*Watching only* RAVENSBANE.) My lord—my lord!

ISTRESS MERTON. Give him air; unbutton his coat. (RACHEL *unbuttons* RAVENSBANE'S *coat, revealing the embroidered waistcoat.*) Ah, Heavens! What do I see?

USTICE MERTON. (*Looks, blanches, and signs silence to* MISTRESS MERTON.) Cynthia!

ISTRESS MERTON. (*Aside to* JUSTICE MERTON, *with deep tensity.*) That waistcoat! that waistcoat! Brother, hast thou never seen it before?

USTICE MERTON. Never, my sister.

ICKON. See! He puffs—he revives. He is coming to himself.

ACHEL. (*As* RAVENSBANE *rises to his feet.*) At last!

ICKON. Look! he is restored.

ACHEL. God be thanked!

ICKON. My lord, Mistress Rachel has saved your life.

AVENSBANE. (*Taking* RACHEL'S *hand.*) Mistress Rachel is mine; we are ours.

ICHARD. Dare to repeat that.

AVENSBANE. (*Looking at* RACHEL.) Her eyes are mine.

ICHARD. (*Flinging his glove in his face.*) And that, sir, is yours.

ACHEL. Richard!

ICHARD. I believe such is the proper fashion in England. If your lordship's last dueling wound is sufficiently healed, perhaps you will deign a reply.

ACHEL. Richard! Your lordship!

AVENSBANE. (*Stoops, picks up the glove, pockets it, bows to* RACHEL, *and steps close to* RICHARD.) Permit me!

(*He blows a puff of smoke full in* RICHARD'S *face.*)

ACT THIRD.

The same day. Late afternoon. The same scene as in Act Second.

RAVENSBANE *and* DICKON *are seated at the table, on which are lying two flails.* RAVENSBANE *is dressed in a costume which, composed of silk and jewels, subtly approximates in design to that of his original grosser composition. So artfully, however, is this contrived that, to one ignorant of his origin, his dress would appear to be merely an odd personal whimsy; whereas, to one initiated, it would stamp him grotesquely as the apotheosis of scarecrows.*

DICKON *is sitting in a pedagogical attitude;* RAVENSBANE *stands near him, making a profound bow in the opposite direction.*

RAVENSBANE. Believe me, ladies, with the true sincerity of the heart.

DICKON. Inflection a little more lachrymose, please: "The *true* sincerity of the *heart.*"

RAVENSBANE. Believe me, ladies, with the *true* sincerity of the *heart.*

DICKON. Prettily, prettily! Next!

RAVENSBANE. (*Changing his mien, as if addressing another person.*) Verily, sir, as that prince of poets, the immortal Virgil, has remarked:—

"Adeo in teneris consuescere multum est."

DICKON. *Basta!* The next.

RAVENSBANE. (*With another change to courtly manner.*) Trust me, your Excellency, I will inform his Majesty of your courtesy.

DICKON. "His Majesty" more emphatic. Remember! You must impress all of the guests this afternoon. But continue, Cobby, dear; the retort now to the challenge!

RAVENSBANE. (*With a superb air.*) The second, I believe.

DICKON. Quite so, my lord.

RAVENSBANE. Sir! the local person whom you represent has done himself the honor of submitting to me a challenge to mortal combat. Sir! Since the remotest times of my feudal ancestors, in such affairs of honor, choice of weapons has ever been the—

DICKON. Prerogative!

RAVENSBANE. Prerogative of the challenged. Sir! This right of etiquette

must be observed. Nevertheless, believe me, I have no selfish desire that my superior—

DICKON. Attainments!

RAVENSBANE. Attainments in this art should assume advantage over my challenger's ignorance. I have, therefore, chosen those combative utensils most appropriate both to his own humble origin and to local tradition. Permit me, sir, to reveal my choice. (*Pointing grandly to the table.*) There are my weapons!

DICKON. Delicious! O thou exquisite flower of love! How thy natal composites have burst in bloom!—The pumpkin in thee to a golden collarette; thy mop of crow's wings to these raven locks; thy broomstick to a lordly limp; thy corn-silk to these pale-tinted tassels. Verily in the gallery of scarecrows, thou art the Apollo Belvedere!

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel—I may see her now?

DICKON. Romeo! Romeo! Was ever such an amorous puppet show!

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel!

DICKON. Wait; let me think! Thou art wound up now, my pretty apparatus, for at least six-and-thirty hours. The wooden angel Gabriel that trumpets the hours on the big clock in Venice is not a more punctual manikin than thou with my speeches. Thou shouldst run, therefore,—

RAVENSBANE. (*Frowning darkly at* DICKON.) Stop talking; permit me! A tutor should know his place.

DICKON. (*Rubbing his hands.*) Nay, your lordship is beyond comparison.

RAVENSBANE. (*In a terrible voice.*) She will come? I shall see her?

(*Enter* MICAH.)

MICAH. Pardon, my lord.

RAVENSBANE. (*Turning joyfully to* MICAH.) Is it she?

MICAH. Captain Bugby, my lord, the Governor's secretary.

DICKON. Good. Squire Talbot's second. Show him in.

RAVENSBANE. (*Flinging despairingly into a chair.*) Ah! ah!

MICAH. (*Lifting the flails from the table.*) Beg pardon, sir; shall I remove—

DICKON. Drop them; go.

MICAH. But, sir—

DICKON. Go, thou slave! (*Exit* MICAH. (DICKON *hands* RAVENSBANE *a book.*) Here, my lord; read. You must b found reading.

RAVENSBANE. (*In childlike despair.*) Sh will not come! I shall not see her (*Throwing the book into the fireplace.* She does not come!

DICKON. Fie, fie, Jack; thou must not b breaking thy Dickon's apron-strings wit a will of thine own. Come!

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel—

DICKON. Be good, boy, and thou shalt se her soon.

(*Enter* CAPTAIN BUGBY.)

Your lordship was saying—Oh! Captai Bugby?

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Nervous and awed.* Captain Bugby, sir, ah! at Lord Raven bane's service—ah!

DICKON. I am Master Dickonson, his lor ship's tutor.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Happy, sir.

DICKON. (*To* RAVENSBANE.) My lor this gentleman waits upon you fro Squire Talbot. (*To* CAPTAIN BUGBY In regard to the challenge this mornin I presume?

CAPTAIN BUGBY. The affair, ah! the affa of this morning, sir.

RAVENSBANE. (*With his former supe air—to* CAPTAIN BUGBY.) The second, believe?

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Quite so, my lord.

RAVENSBANE. Sir! the local person who you represent has done himself the hon of submitting to me a challenge to mort combat. Sir! Since the remotest tim of my feudal ancestors, in such affai of honor, choice of weapons has ev been the pre-pre- (DICKON *looks at h intensely.*) prerogative of the challeng Sir! this right of etiquette must be o served.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Indeed, yes, my lord.

DICKON. Pray do not interrupt. (*To* R VENSBANE.) Your lordship: "observe

RAVENSBANE. —observed. Neverthele believe me, I have no selfish desire t my superior a-a-at-attainments in t art should assume advantage over challenger's ignorance. I have, the fore, chosen those combative utens most appropriate both to his own hum origin and to local tradition. Per me, sir, to reveal my choice. (*Point to the table.*) There are my weapo

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Looking bewildere* These, my lord?

RAVENSBANE. Those.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. But these are—are flails.
RAVENSBANE. Flails.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. Flails, my lord?—Do I understand that your lordship and Squire Talbot—
RAVENSBANE. Exactly.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. But your lordship—flails!

(DICKON'S *intense glance focusses on* RAVENSBANE'S *face with the faintest of smiles.*)

RAVENSBANE. My adversary should be deft in their use. He has doubtless wielded them frequently on his barn floor.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. Ahaha! I understand now. Your lordship—ah! is a wit. Haha! Flails!
DICKON. His lordship's satire is poignant.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. Indeed, sir, so keen that I must apologize for laughing at my principal's expense. But—(*soberly to* RAVENSBANE)—my lord, if you will deign to speak one moment seriously—
RAVENSBANE. Seriously?
CAPTAIN BUGBY. I will take pleasure in informing Squire Talbot—ah! as to your *real* preference for—
RAVENSBANE. For flails, sir. I have, permit me, nothing further to say. Flails are final. (*Turns away haughtily.*)
CAPTAIN BUGBY. Eh! What! Must I really report—?
DICKON. Lord Ravensbane's will is inflexible.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. And his wit, sir, incomparable. I am sorry for the Squire, but 't will be the greatest joke in years. Ah! will you tell me—is it—(*indicating* RAVENSBANE'S *smoking*)—is it the latest fashion?
DICKON. Lord Ravensbane is always the latest.
CAPTAIN BUGBY. Obliged servant, sir. Aha! Such a joke as—O Lord! flails.

(*Exit.*)

DICKON. (*Gayly to* RAVENSBANE.) Bravo, my pumpky dear! That squelches the jealous betrothed. Now nothing remains but for you to continue to dazzle the enamored Rachel, and so present yourself to the Justice as a pseudo-son-nephew-in-law.
RAVENSBANE. I may go to Mistress Rachel?
DICKON. She will come to you. She is reading now a poem from you, which I left on her dressing-table.
RAVENSBANE. She is reading a poem from me?
DICKON. With your pardon, my lord, I penned it for you. I am something of a poetaster. Indeed, I flatter myself that I have dictated some of the finest lines in literature.
RAVENSBANE. Dickon! She will come?
DICKON. She comes!

(*Enter* RACHEL, *reading from a piece of paper.*)

(DICKON *draws* RAVENSBANE *back.*)

RACHEL. (*Reads.*) "To Mistress R——, enchantress:—

"If faith in witchcraft be a sin,
Alas! what peril he is in
Who plights his faith and love in thee,
Sweetest maid of sorcery.

"If witchcraft be a whirling brain,
A roving eye, a heart of pain,
Whose wound no thread of fate can stitch,
How hast thou conjured, cruel witch,—

With the brain, eye, heart, and total mortal residue of thine enamored.

"JACK LANTHORNE,
"[LORD R——.]"

(DICKON *goes out.*)

RACHEL. "To Mistress R——, enchantress:" R! It *must* be. R—— must mean—
RAVENSBANE. (*With passionate deference.*) Rachel!
RACHEL. Ah! How you surprised me, my lord!
RAVENSBANE. You are come again; you are come again.
RACHEL. Has anything happened? Oh, my lord, I have been in such terror. Promise me that there shall be—no—duel!
RAVENSBANE. No duel.
RACHEL. Oh, I am so gratefully happy!
RAVENSBANE. I know I am only a thing to make Mistress Rachel happy. Ah! look at me once more. When you look at me, I live.
RACHEL. It is strange, indeed, my lord, how the familiar world, the daylight, the heavens themselves have changed since your arrival.
RAVENSBANE. This is the world; this is the light; this is the heavens themselves. Mistress Rachel is looking at me.
RACHEL. For me, it is less strange, perhaps. I never saw a real lord before. But you, my lord, must have seen so

many, many girls in the great world.

RAVENSBANE. No, no; never.

RACHEL. No other girls before to-day, my lord!

RAVENSBANE. Before to-day? I do not know; I do not care. I was not—here. To-day I was born—in your eyes. Ah! my brain whirls!

RACHEL. (*Smiling.*)

"If witchcraft be a whirling brain,
A roving eye, a heart of pain,—"

(*In a whisper.*) My lord, do you really believe in witchcraft?

RAVENSBANE. With all my heart.

RACHEL. And approve of it?

RAVENSBANE. With all my soul.

RACHEL. So do I—that is, innocent witchcraft; not to harm anybody, you know, but just to feel all the dark mystery and the trembling excitement—the way you feel when you blow out your candle all alone in your bedroom and watch the little smoke fade away in the moonshine.

RAVENSBANE. Fade away in the moonshine!

RACHEL. Oh, but we must n't speak of it. In a town like this, all such mysticism is considered damnable. But your lordship understands and approves? I am so glad! Have you read the *Philosophical Considerations* of Glanville, the *Saducismus Triumphatus,* and the *Presignifications of Dreams?* What kind of witchcraft, my lord, do you believe in?

RAVENSBANE. In all yours.

RACHEL. Nay, your lordship must not take me for a real witch. I can only tell fortunes, you know—like this morning.

RAVENSBANE. I know; you told how my heart would break.

RACHEL. Oh, that 's palmistry, and that is n't always certain. But the surest way to prophesy—do you know what it is?

RAVENSBANE. Tell me.

RACHEL. To count the crows. Do you know how?

One for sorrow—

RAVENSBANE. Ha, yes!—

Two for mirth!

RACHEL.

Three for a wedding—

RAVENSBANE.

Four for a birth—

RACHEL.

And five for the happiest thing on earth!

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel, come! Le us go and count five crows.

RACHEL. (*Delightedly.*) Why, my lord how did *you* ever learn it? I got it fron an old goody here in town—a real witch wife. If you will promise not to tell a secret, I will show you—But you mus promise!

RAVENSBANE. I promise.

RACHEL. Come, then. I will show you a real piece of witchcraft that I bough from her this morning—the glass o truth. There! Behind that curtain. I you look in, you will see— But come I will show you. (*They put their hand on the cords of the curtain.*) Just pul that string, and—ah!

DICKON. (*Stepping out through the cur tain.*) My lord, your pipe.

RACHEL. Master Dickonson, how yo frightened me!

DICKON. So excessively sorry!

RACHEL. But how did you—?

DICKON. I believe you were showing hi lordship—

RACHEL. (*Turning hurriedly away.*) Oh nothing; nothing at all.

RAVENSBANE. (*Sternly to* DICKON.) Wh do you come?

DICKON. (*Handing back* RAVENSBANE' *pipe, filled.*) Allow me. (*Aside.*) 'T i high time you came to the point, Jack 't is near your lordship's reception Woo and win, boy; woo and win.

RAVENSBANE. (*Haughtily.*) Leave me.

DICKON. Your lordship 's humble, ver humble. (*Exit.*

RACHEL. (*Shivering.*) My dear lord, wh do you keep this man?

RAVENSBANE. I—keep this man?

RACHEL. Pardon my rudeness—I canno endure him.

RAVENSBANE. You do not like him? Al then, I do not like him also. We wi send him away—you and I.

RACHEL. You, my lord, of course; bu I—

RAVENSBANE. You will be Dickon! Yo will be with me always and light m pipe. And I will live for you, and figh for you, and kill your betrothed!

RACHEL. (*Drawing away.*) No, no!

RAVENSBANE. Ah! but your eyes sa "yes." Mistress Rachel leaves me; bu Rachel in her eyes remains. Is it not so

RACHEL. What can I say, my lord!

is true that since my eyes met yours, a new passion has entered into my soul. I have felt—but 't is so impertinent, my lord, so absurd in me, a mere girl, and you a nobleman of power—yet I have felt it irresistibly, my dear lord,—a longing to help you. I am so sorry for you—so sorry for you! I pity you deeply.—Forgive me; forgive me, my lord!

RAVENSBANE. It is enough.

RACHEL. Indeed, indeed, 't is so rude of me,—'t is so unreasonable.

RAVENSBANE. It is enough. I grow—I grow—I grow! I am a plant; you give it rain and sun. I am a flower; you give it light and dew. I am a soul, you give it love and speech. I grow. Toward you—toward you I grow!

RACHEL. My lord, I do not understand it, how so poor and mere a girl as I can have helped you. Yet I do believe it is so; for I feel it so. What can I do for you?

RAVENSBANE. Be mine. Let me be yours.

RACHEL. But, my lord—do I love you?

RAVENSBANE. What is "I love you"? Is it a kiss, a sigh, an embrace? Ah! then, you do not love me.—"I love you": is it to nourish, to nestle, to lift up, to smile upon, to make greater—a worm? Ah! then, you love me.

(*Enter* RICHARD *at left back, unobserved.*)

RACHEL. Do not speak so of yourself, my lord; nor exalt me so falsely.

RAVENSBANE. Be mine.

RACHEL. A great glory has descended upon this day.

RAVENSBANE. Be mine.

RACHEL. Could I but be sure that this glory is love—Oh, *then!*

(*Turns toward* RAVENSBANE.)

RICHARD. (*Stepping between them.*) It is *not* love; it is witchcraft.

RACHEL. Who are you?—Richard?

RICHARD. You have, indeed, forgotten me? Would to God, Rachel, I could forget you.

RAVENSBANE. Ah, permit me, sir—

RICHARD. Silence! (*To* RACHEL.) Against my will, I am a convert to your own mysticism; for nothing less than damnable illusion could so instantly wean your heart from me to—this. I do not pretend to understand it; but that it is witchcraft I am convinced; and I will save you from it.

RACHEL. Go; please go.

RAVENSBANE. Permit me, sir; you have not replied yet to flails!

RICHARD. Permit *me,* sir. (*Taking something from his coat.*) My answer is—bare cob! (*Holding out a shelled corncob.*) Thresh this, sir, for your antagonist. 'T is the only one worthy your lordship.

(*Tosses it contemptuously toward him.*)

RAVENSBANE. Upon my honor, as a man—

RICHARD. As a *man,* forsooth! Were you, indeed, a man, Lord Ravensbane, I would have accepted your weapons, and flailed you out of New England. But it is not my custom to chastise runagates from asylums, or to banter further words with a natural and a ninny.

RACHEL. Squire Talbot! Will you leave my uncle's house?

RAVENSBANE. One moment, mistress:—I did not wholly catch the import of this gentleman's speech, but I fancy I have insulted him by my reply to his challenge. One insult may perhaps be remedied by another. Sir, permit me to call *you* a ninny, and to offer you—(*drawing his sword and offering it*)—swords.

RICHARD. Thanks; I reject the offer.

RAVENSBANE. (*Turning away despondently.*) He rejects it. Well!

RACHEL. (*To* RICHARD.) And *now* will you leave?

RICHARD. At once. But one word more. Rachel—Rachel, have you forgotten this morning and the Glass of Truth?

RACHEL. (*Coldly.*) No.

RICHARD. Call it a fancy now if you will. I scoffed at it; yes. Yet *you* believed it. I loved you truly, you said. Well, have I changed?

RACHEL. Yes.

RICHARD. Will you test me again—in the glass?

RACHEL. No. Go; leave us.

RICHARD. I will go. I have still a word with your aunt.

RAVENSBANE. (*To* RICHARD.) I beg your pardon, sir. You said just now that had I been a man—

RICHARD. I say, Lord Ravensbane, that the straight fiber of a true man never warps the love of a woman. As for yourself, you have my contempt and pity. Pray to God, sir, pray to God to make you a man. (*Exit.*)

RACHEL. Oh! it is intolerable! (*To* RAVENSBANE.) My dear lord, I do believe in my heart that I love you, and if so, I

will with gratitude be your wife. But, my lord, strange glamors, strange darknesses reel, and bewilder my mind. I must be alone; I must think and decide. Will you give me this tassel?

RAVENSBANE. (*Unfastening a silk tassel from his coat and giving it to her.*) Oh, take it.

RACHEL. If I decide that I love you, that I will be your wife—I will wear it this afternoon at the reception. Good-bye.

(*Exit, right.*)

RAVENSBANE. Mistress Rachel!— (*He is left alone. As he looks about gropingly, and raises his arms in vague prayer,* DICKON *appears from the right and watches him, with a smile.*) God, are you here? Dear God, I pray to you—make me to be a man! (*Exit, left.*)

DICKON. Poor Jacky! Thou shouldst 'a' prayed to t' other one.

(*Enter, right,* JUSTICE MERTON.)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* DICKON.) Will you not listen? Will you not listen!

DICKON. Such a delightful room!

JUSTICE MERTON. Are you merciless?

DICKON. And such a living portrait of your worship! The waistcoat is so beautifully executed.

JUSTICE MERTON. If I pay him ten thousand pounds—

(*Enter, right,* MISTRESS MERTON, *who goes toward the table. Enter, left,* MICAH.)

MISTRESS MERTON. Flails! Flails in the parlor!

MICAH. The minister and his wife have turned into the gate, madam.

MISTRESS MERTON. The guests! Is it so late?

MICAH. Four o'clock, madam.

MISTRESS MERTON. Remove these things at once.

MICAH. Yes, madam. (*He lifts them, and starts for the door where he pauses to look back and speak.*) Madam, in all my past years of service at Merton House, I never waited upon a lord till to-day. Madam, in all my future years of service at Merton House, I trust I may never wait upon a lord again.

MISTRESS MERTON. Micah, mind the knocker.

MICAH. Yes, madam.

(*Exit at left back. Sounds of a brass knocker outside.*)

MISTRESS MERTON. Rachel! Rachel!

(*Exit, left.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*To* DICKON.) So you are contented with nothing less than the sacrifice of my niece!

(*Enter* MICAH.)

MICAH. Minister Dodge, your Worship; and Mistress Dodge. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter the* MINISTER *and his* WIFE.)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Stepping forward to receive them.*) Believe me, this is a great privilege.—Madam! (*Bowing.*)

MINISTER DODGE. (*Taking his hand.*) The privilege is ours, Justice; to enter a righteous man's house is to stand, as it were, on God's threshold.

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Nervously.*) Amen, amen. Permit me—ah! Lord Ravensbane, my young guest of honor, will be here directly—permit me to present his lordship's tutor, Master Dickonson; the Reverend Master Dodge, Mistress Dodge.

MINISTER DODGE. (*Offering his hand.*) Master Dickonson, sir—

DICKON. (*Barely touching the minister's fingers, bows charmingly to his wife.*) Madam, of all professions in the world, your husband's most allures me.

MISTRESS DODGE. 'T is a worthy one, sir.

DICKON. Ah! Mistress Dodge, and so arduous—especially for a minister's wife.

(*He leads her to a chair.*)

MISTRESS DODGE. (*Accepting the chair.*) Thank you.

MINISTER DODGE. Lord Ravensbane comes from abroad?

JUSTICE MERTON. From London.

MINISTER DODGE. An old friend of yours, I understand.

JUSTICE MERTON. From London, yes. Did I say from London? Quite so; from London.

(*Enter* MICAH.)

MICAH. Captain Bugby, the Governor's secretary. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* CAPTAIN BUGBY. *He walks with a slight lameness, and holds daintily in his hand a pipe, from which he puffs with dandy deliberation.*)

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Justice Merton, your very humble servant.

JUSTICE MERTON. Believe me, Captain Bugby.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Profusely.*) Ah, Master Dickonson! my dear friend Master Dickonson—this is, indeed—ah! How is his lordship since—aha! but discre

tion! Mistress Dodge—her servant! Ah! yes—(*indicating his pipe with a smile of satisfaction*)—the latest, I assure you; the very latest from London. Ask Master Dickonson.

MINISTER DODGE. (*Looking at* CAPTAIN BUGBY.) These will hatch out in the springtime.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Confidentially to* DICKON.) But really, my good friend, may not I venture to inquire how his lordship—ah! has been in health since the—ah! since—

DICKON. (*Impressively.*) Oh! quite, quite!

(*Enter* MISTRESS MERTON; *she joins* JUSTICE MERTON *and* MINISTER DODGE.)

CAPTAIN BUGBY. You know, I informed Squire Talbot of his lordship's epigrammatic retort—his retort of—shh! ha haha! Oh, that reply was a stiletto; 't was sharper than a sword-thrust, I assure you. To have conceived it—'t was inspiration; but to have expressed it—oh! 't was genius. Hush! "Flails"! Oh! It sticks me now in the ribs. I shall die with concealing it.

MINISTER DODGE. (*To* MISTRESS MERTON.) 'T is true, mistress; but if there were more like your brother in the parish, the conscience of the community would be clearer.

(*Enter* MICAH.)

MICAH. The Reverend Master Rand of Harvard College; the Reverend Master Todd of Harvard College. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter two elderly, straight-backed divines.*)

JUSTICE MERTON. (*Greeting them.*) Permit me, gentlemen; this is fortunate—before your return to Cambridge.

(*He conducts them to* MISTRESS MERTON *and* MINISTER DODGE. DICKON *is ingratiating himself with* MISTRESS DODGE; CAPTAIN BUGBY, *laughed at by both parties, is received by neither.*)

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Puffing smoke toward the ceiling.*) Really, I cannot understand what keeps his Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor, so long. He has two such charming daughters, Master Dickonson—

DICKON. (*To* MISTRESS DODGE.) Yes, yes; such suspicious women with their charms are an insult to the virtuous ladies of the parish.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. How, sir!

MISTRESS DODGE. And to think that she should actually shoe horses herself!

CAPTAIN BUGBY. (*Piqued, walks another way.*) Well!

REV. MASTER RAND. (*To* JUSTICE MERTON.) It would not be countenanced in the college yard, sir.

REV. MASTER TODD. A pipe! Nay, *mores inhibitæ!*

JUSTICE MERTON. 'T is most unfortunate, gentlemen; but I understand 't is the new vogue in London.

(*Enter* MICAH.)

MICAH. His Excellency, Sir Charles Reddington, Lieutenant-Governor; the Mistress Reddingtons.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. At last!

MISTRESS MERTON. (*Aside.*) Micah.

(MICAH *goes to her.*)

(*Enter* SIR CHARLES, MISTRESS REDDINGTON, *and* AMELIA REDDINGTON.)

JUSTICE MERTON. Your Excellency, this is, indeed, a distinguished honor.

SIR CHARLES. (*Shaking hands.*) Fine weather, Merton. Where 's your young lord?

THE TWO GIRLS. (*Curtsying.*) Justice Merton, Mistress Merton.

(MICAH *goes out.*)

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Oh, my dear Mistress Reddington! Charming Mistress Amelia! You are so very late, but you shall hear—hush!

MISTRESS REDDINGTON. (*Noticing his pipe.*) Why, what is this, Captain?

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Oh, the latest, I assure you, the very latest. Wait till you see his lordship.

AMELIA. What! is n't he here? (*Laughing.*) La, Captain! Do look at the man!

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Oh, he 's coming directly. Quite the mode—what?

(*He talks to them aside, where they titter.*)

SIR CHARLES. (*To* DICKON.) What say? Traveling for his health?

DICKON. Partially, your Excellency; but my young pupil and master is a singularly affectionate nature.

THE TWO GIRLS. (*To* CAPTAIN BUGBY.) What! flails—really!

(*They burst into laughter among themselves.*)

DICKON. He has journeyed here to Massachusetts peculiarly to pay this visit to

Justice Merton—his father's dearest friend.

Sir Charles. Ah! knew him abroad, eh?

Dickon. In Rome, your Excellency.

Mistress Dodge. (*To* Justice Merton.) Why, I thought it was in London.

Justice Merton. London, true, quite so; we made a trip together to Lisbon—ah! Rome.

Dickon. Paris, was it not, sir?

Justice Merton. (*In great distress.*) Paris, Paris, very true; I am—I am—sometimes I am—

(*Enter* Micah, *right.*)

Micah. (*Announces.*) Lord Ravensbane.

(*Enter right,* Ravensbane *with* Rachel.)

Justice Merton. (*With a gasp of relief.*) Ah! his lordship is arrived.

(*Murmurs of "his lordship" and a flutter among the girls and* Captain Bugby.)

Captain Bugby. Look!—Now!

Justice Merton. Welcome, my lord! (*To* Sir Charles.) Your Excellency, let me introduce—permit me—

Ravensbane. Permit *me;* (*addressing her*) Mistress Rachel!—Mistress Rachel will introduce—

Rachel. (*Curtsying.*) Sir Charles, allow me to present my friend, Lord Ravensbane.

Mistress Reddington. (*Aside to* Amelia.) Her *friend*—did you hear?

Sir Charles. Mistress Rachel, I see you are as pretty as ever. Lord Ravensbane, your hand, sir.

Ravensbane. Trust me, your Excellency, I will inform his Majesty of your courtesy.

Captain Bugby. (*Watching* Ravensbane *with chagrin.*) On my life! he 's lost his limp.

Ravensbane. (*Apart to* Rachel.) You said: "A great glory has descended upon this day."

Rachel. (*Shyly.*) My lord!

Ravensbane. Be sure—O mistress, be sure—that this glory is love.

Sir Charles. My daughters, Fanny and Amelia—Lord Ravensbane.

The Two Girls. (*Curtsying.*) Your lordship!

Sir Charles. Good girls, but silly.

The Two Girls. Papa!

Ravensbane. Believe me, ladies, with the *true* sincerity of the *heart.*

Mistress Reddington. Is n't he perfection!

Captain Bugby. What said I?

Amelia. (*Giggling.*) I can't help thinking of flails.

Sir Charles. (*In a loud whisper aside to* Justice Merton.) Is it congratulations for your niece?

Justice Merton. Not—not precisely.

Dickon. (*To* Justice Merton.) Your worship—a word. (*Leads him aside.*)

Ravensbane. (*Whom* Rachel *continues to introduce to the guests, speaks to* Master Rand.) Verily, sir, as that prince of poets, the immortal Virgil, has remarked:

"Adeo in teneris consuescere multum est."

Rev. Master Todd. His lordship is evidently a university man.

Rev. Master Rand. Evidently most accomplished.

Justice Merton. (*Aside to* Dickon.) A song! Why, it is beyond all bounds of custom and decorum.

Dickon. Believe me, there is no such flatterer to win the maiden heart as music.

Justice Merton. And here; in this presence! Never!

Dickon. Nevertheless, it will amuse me vastly, and you will announce it.

Justice Merton. (*With hesitant embarrassment, which he seeks to conceal.*) Your Excellency and friends, I have great pleasure in announcing his lordship's condescension in consenting to regale our present company—with a song.

Several Voices. (*In various degrees of amazement and curiosity.*) A song!

Mistress Merton. Gilead! What is this?

Justice Merton. The selection is a German ballad—a particular favorite at the court of Prussia, where his lordship last rendered it. His tutor has made a translation which is entitled—

Dickon. "The Prognostication of the Crows."

All. Crows!

Justice Merton. And I am requested to remind you that in the ancient heathen mythology of Germany, the crow or raven was the fateful bird of the god Woden.

Captain Bugby. How prodigiously novel!

Minister Dodge. (*Frowning.*) Unparalleled!

Sir Charles. A ballad! Come now, that sounds like old England again. Let 's

have it. Will his lordship sing without music?

JUSTICE MERTON. Master Dickonson, hem! has been—persuaded—to accompany his lordship on the spinet.

AMELIA. How delightful!

REV. MASTER RAND. (*Aside to* TODD.) Shall we remain?

REV. MASTER TODD. We must.

RAVENSBANE. (*To* RACHEL.) My tassel, dear mistress; you do not wear it?

RACHEL. My heart still wavers, my lord. But whilst you sing, I will decide.

RAVENSBANE. Whilst I sing? My fate, then, is waiting at the end of a song?

RACHEL. At the end of a song.

DICKON. (*Calling to* RAVENSBANE.) Your lordship!

RAVENSBANE. (*Starting, turns to the company.*) Permit me.

(DICKON *sits at the spinet. At first, his fingers in playing give sound only to the soft tinkling notes of that ancient instrument; but gradually, strange notes and harmonies of an aërial orchestra mingle with, and at length drown, the spinet. The final chorus is produced solely by fantastic symphonic cawings, as of countless crows, in harsh but musical accord. During the song* RICHARD *enters.* DICKON'S *music, however, does not cease but fills the intervals between the verses. To his accompaniment, amid the whispered and gradually increasing wonder, resentment, and dismay of the assembled guests,* RAVENSBANE, *with his eyes fixed upon* RACHEL, *sings.*)

"Baron von Rabentod arose;
(The golden sun was rising)
Before him flew a flock of crows:
Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing heigh!
Sing—

"Ill speed, ill speed thee, baron-wight;
Ill speed thy palfrey pawing!
Blithe is the morn but black the night
That hears a raven's cawing."
(*Chorus.*)
Caw! Caw! Caw!

MISTRESS DODGE. (*Whispers to her husband.*) Did you hear them?

MINISTER DODGE. Hush!

AMELIA. (*Sotto voce.*) What *can* it be?

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Oh, the latest, be sure.

DICKON. You note, my friends, the accompanying harmonics; they are an intrinsic part of the ballad, and may not be omitted.

RAVENSBANE. (*Sings.*)

"The baron reckèd not a pin;
(For the golden sun was rising)
He rode to woo, he rode to win;
Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing heigh!
Sing—

"He rode into his prince's hall
Through knights and damsels flow'ry:
'Thy daughter, prince, I bid thee call;
I claim her hand and dowry.'"

(*Enter* RICHARD. MISTRESS MERTON *seizes his arm nervously*)

SIR CHARLES. (*To* CAPTAIN BUGBY.) This gentleman's playing is rather ventriloquistical.

CAPTAIN BUGBY. Quite, as it were.

REV. MASTER TODD. This smells unholy.

REV. MASTER RAND. (*To* TODD.) Shall we leave?

RAVENSBANE. (*Sings.*)

"What cock is this, with crest so high,
That crows with such a pother?"
"Baron von Rabentod am I;
Methinks we know each other."

"Now welcome, welcome, dear guest of mine,
So long why didst thou tarry?
Now, for the sake of auld lang syne,
My daughter thou shalt marry."

AMELIA. (*To* BUGBY.) And he kept right on smoking!

MINISTER DODGE. (*Who, with* RAND *and* TODD, *has risen uneasily.*) This smacks of witchcraft.

RAVENSBANE. (*Sings.*)

The bride is brought, the priest as well;
(The golden sun was passing)
They stood beside the altar rail;
Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing—
"Woman, with this ring I thee wed."
What makes his voice so awing?
The baron by the bride is dead:
Outside the crows were cawing.

(*Chorus, which grows tumultuous, seeming to fill the room with the invisible birds.*)

Caw! Caw! Caw!

(*The guests rise in confusion.* DICKON *still plays delightedly, and the strange music continues.*)

MINISTER DODGE. This is no longer godly. —Justice Merton! Justice Merton, sir!—

RAVENSBANE. (*To* RACHEL, *who holds his tassel in her hand.*) Ah! and you have my tassel!

RACHEL. See! I will wear it now. You yourself shall fasten it.

RAVENSBANE. Rachel! Mistress!

RACHEL. My dear lord!

(*As* RAVENSBANE *is placing the silken tassel on* RACHEL'S *breast to fasten it there,* RICHARD, *by the mirror, takes hold of the curtain strings.*)

RICHARD. I told you—witchcraft, like murder will out! Lovers! Behold yourselves! (*He pulls the curtain back.*)

RACHEL. (*Looking into the glass, screams and turns her gaze fearfully upon* RAVENSBANE.) Ah! Do not look!

DICKON. (*Who, having turned round from the spinet, has leaped forward, now turns back again, biting his finger.*) Too late!

(*In the glass are reflected the figures of* RACHEL *and* RAVENSBANE—RACHEL *just as she herself appears, but* RAVENSBANE *in his essential form of a scarecrow, in every movement reflecting* RAVENSBANE'S *motions. The thing in the glass is about to pin a wisp of corn-silk on the mirrored breast of the maiden.*)

RAVENSBANE. What is there?

RACHEL. (*Looking again, starts away from* RAVENSBANE.) Leave me! Leave me!—Richard!

(*She faints in* RICHARD'S *arms.*)

RAVENSBANE. Fear not, mistress, I will kill the thing. (*Drawing his sword, he rushes at the glass. Within, the scarecrow, with a drawn wheel-spoke, approaches him at equal speed. They come face to face and recoil.*) Ah! ah! Fear'st thou me? What art thou? Why, 't is a glass. Thou mockest me? Look, look, mistress, it mocks me! O God, no! no! Take it away. Dear God, do not look!—It is I!

ALL. (*Rushing to the doors.*) Witchcraft! Witchcraft!

(*As* RAVENSBANE *stands frantically confronting his abject reflection, struck in a like posture of despair, the curtain falls.*)

ACT FOURTH.

The scene is the same, but it is night. The moon, shining in broadly at the window, discovers RAVENSBANE *alone, prostrate before the mirror. Raised on one arm to a half-sitting posture, he gazes fixedly at the vaguely seen image of the scarecrow prostrate in the glass.*

RAVENSBANE. All have left me—but not thou. Rachel has left me; her eyes have turned away from me; she is gone. All that I loved, all that loved me, have left me. A thousand ages—a thousand ages ago, they went away; and thou and I have gazed upon each other's desertedness. Speak! and be pitiful! If thou art I, inscrutable image, if thou dost feel these pangs thine own, show then self-mercy; speak! What art thou? What am I? Why are we here? How comes it that we feel and guess and suffer? Nay, though thou answer not these doubts, yet mock them, mock them aloud, even as there, monstrous, thou counterfeitest mine actions. Speak, abject enigma!—Speak, poor shadow, thou—(*Recoiling wildly.*) Stand back, inanity! Thrust not thy mawkish face in pity toward me. Ape and idiot! Scarecrow!—to console me! Haha!—A flail and broomstick! a cob, a gourd and pumpkin, to fuse and sublimate themselves into a mage-philosopher, who discourseth metaphysics to itself—itself! God! Dost Thou hear? Itself! For even such am I—I whom Thou madest to love Rachel. Why, God—haha! dost Thou dwell in this thing? Is it Thou that peerest forth *at* me—*from* me? Why, hark then; Thou shalt listen, and answer—if Thou canst. Between the rise and setting of a sun, I have walked in this world of Thine. I have been thrilled with wonder; I have been calmed with knowledge; I have trembled with joy and passion. Power, beauty, love have ravished me. Infinity itself, like a dream, has blazed before me with the certitude of prophecy; and I have cried: "This world, the heavens, time itself, are mine to conquer," and I have thrust forth mine arm to wear Thy shield forever—and lo! for my shield Thou reachest me—a mirror, and whisperest: "Know thyself! Thou art—a scarecrow: a tinkling clod, a rigmarole of dust, a lump of ordure, contemptible, superfluous, inane!" Haha! Hahaha! And with such scarecrows Thou dost people a planet! O ludicrous! Monstrous! Ludicrous! At least, I thank Thee

God! at least this breathing bathos can laugh at itself. Thou hast vouchsafed to me, Spirit,—hahaha!—to know myself. Mine, mine is the consummation of man—even self-contempt! (*Pointing in the glass with an agony of derision.*) Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS. (*More and more faintly.*) Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

(RAVENSBANE *throws himself prone upon the floor, beneath the window, sobbing. There is a pause of silence, and the moon shines brighter. —Slowly then* RAVENSBANE, *getting to his knees, looks out into the night.*)

RAVENSBANE. What face are you, high up through the twinkling leaves? Do you not, like all the rest, turn, aghast, your eyes away from me—me, abject enormity, groveling at your feet? Gracious being, do you not fear—despise me? O white peace of the world, beneath your gaze the clouds glow silver, and the herded cattle, slumbering far afield, crouch—beautiful. The slough shines lustrous as a bridal veil. Beautiful face, you are Rachel's, and you have changed the world. Nothing is mean, but you have made it miraculous; nothing is loathsome, nothing ludicrous, but you have converted it to loveliness, that even this shadow of a mockery myself, cast by your light, gives me the dear assurance I am a man. Rachel, mistress, mother, out of my suffering you have brought forth my soul. I am saved!

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS. A very pretty sophistry.

(*The moonlight grows dimmer, as at the passing of a cloud.*)

RAVENSBANE. Ah! what voice has snatched you from me?

THE IMAGE. A most poetified pumpkin!

RAVENSBANE. Thing! dost thou speak at last? My soul abhors thee.

THE IMAGE. I *am* thy soul.

RAVENSBANE. Thou liest.

THE IMAGE. Our daddy Dickon and our mother Rickby begot and conceived us at sunrise, in a Jack-o'-lantern.

RAVENSBANE. Thou liest, torturing illusion. Thou art but a phantom in a glass.

THE IMAGE. Why, very true. So art thou. *We* are a pretty phantom in a glass.

RAVENSBANE. It is a lie. I am no longer thou. I feel it; I am a man.

THE IMAGE.

And prithee, what 's a man? Man 's but a mirror,
Wherein the imps and angels play charades,
Make faces, mope, and pull each other's hair—
Till crack! the sly urchin Death shivers the glass,
And the bare coffin boards show underneath.

RAVENSBANE. Yea! if it be so, thou coggery! if both of us be indeed but illusions, why, now let us end together. But if it be not so, then let *me* for evermore be free of thee. Now is the test—the glass! (*Springing to the fireplace, he seizes an iron crosspiece from the andirons.*) I 'll play your urchin Death and shatter it. Let see what shall survive!

(*He rushes to strike the glass with the iron.* DICKON *steps out of the mirror, closing the curtain.*)

DICKON. I would n't, really!

RAVENSBANE. Dickon! dear Dickon! is it you?

DICKON. Yes, Jacky! it 's dear Dickon, and I really would n't.

RAVENSBANE. Would n't what, Dickon?

DICKON. Sweep the cobwebs off the sky with thine aspiring broomstick. When a man questions fate, 't is bad digestion. When a scarecrow does it, 't is bad taste.

RAVENSBANE. At last, *you* will tell me the truth, Dickon! Am I, then—that thing?

DICKON. You must n't be so skeptical. Of course you 're that thing.

RAVENSBANE. Ah me despicable! Rachel, why didst thou ever look upon me?

DICKON. I fear, cobby, thou hast never studied woman's heart and hero-worship. Take thyself now. I remarked to Goody Bess, thy mother, this morning, as I was chucking her thy pate from the hayloft, that thou wouldst make a Mark Antony or an Alexander before night.

RAVENSBANE. Cease! cease! in pity's name. You do not know the agony of being ridiculous.

DICKON. Nay, Jacky, all mortals are ridiculous. Like you, they were rummaged out of the muck; and like you, they shall return to the dunghill. I advise 'em, like you, to enjoy the interim, and smoke.

RAVENSBANE. This pipe, this ludicrous pipe that I forever set to my lips and puff! Why must I, Dickon? Why?

DICKON. To avoid extinction—merely. You see, 't is just as your fellow in there (*pointing to the glass*) explained. You yourself are the subtlest of mirrors, polished out of pumpkin and pipe-smoke. Into this mirror the fair Mistress Rachel has projected her lovely image, and thus provided you with what men call a soul.

RAVENSBANE. Ah! then, I have a soul—the truth of me? Mistress Rachel has indeed made me a man?

DICKON. Don't flatter thyself, cobby. Break thy pipe, and whiff—soul, Mistress Rachel, man, truth, and this pretty world itself, go up in the last smoke.

RAVENSBANE. No, no! not Mistress Rachel.

DICKON. Mistress Rachel exists for your lordship merely in your lordship's pipe-bowl.

RAVENSBANE. Wretched, niggling caricature that I am! All is lost to me—lost!

DICKON. "Paradise Lost" again! Always blaming it on me. There 's that gaunt fellow in England has lately wrote a parody on me when I was in the apple business.

RAVENSBANE. (*Falling on his knees and bowing his head.*) O God! I am so contemptible!

(*Enter, at door back,* GOODY RICKBY; *her blacksmith garb is hidden under a dingy black mantle with a peaked hood.*)

DICKON. Good verse, too, for a parody! (*Ruminating, raises one arm rhetorically above* RAVENSBANE.)

—"Farewell, happy fields
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors; hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor."

GOODY RICKBY. (*Seizing his arm.*) Dickon!

DICKON. Hullo! You, Bess!

GOODY RICKBY. There 's not a minute to lose. Justice Merton and the neighbors have ended their conference at Minister Dodge's, and are returning here.

DICKON. Well, let 'em come. We 're ready.

GOODY RICKBY. But thou toldst me they had discovered—

DICKON. A scarecrow in a mirror. Well? The glass is bewitched; that 's all.

GOODY RICKBY. All? Witchcraft is hanging—that 's all! And the mirror was bought of me—of me, the witch. Wilt thou be my hangman, Dickon?

DICKON. Wilt thou give me a kiss, Goody? When did ever thy Dickon desert thee?

GOODY RICKBY. But how, boy, wilt thou—

DICKON. Trust me, and thy son. When the Justice's niece is thy daughter-in-law, all will be safe. For the Justice will cherish his niece's family.

GOODY RICKBY. But when he knows—

DICKON. But he shall *not* know. How can he? When the glass is denounced as a fraud, how will he, or any person, ever know that we made this fellow out of rubbish? Who, forsooth, but a poet—or a devil—*would* believe it? You must n't credit men with our imaginations, my dear.

GOODY RICKBY. Then thou wilt pull me through this safe?

DICKON. As I adore thee—and my own reputation.

GOODY RICKBY. (*At the window.*) I see their lanterns down the road.

DICKON. Stay, marchioness—his lordship! My lord—your lady mother.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Curtsying, laughs shrilly.*) Your servant—my son!
(*About to depart.*)

RAVENSBANE. Ye lie! both of you!—I was born of Rachel.

DICKON. Tut, tut, Jacky; you must n't mix up mothers and prospective wives at your age. It 's fatal.

GOODY RICKBY. (*Excitedly.*) They 're coming! (*Exit.*)

DICKON. (*Calling after her.*) Fear not; I 'll overtake thee.

RAVENSBANE. She is coming; Rachel is coming, and I may not look upon her!

DICKON. Eh? Why not?

RAVENSBANE. I am a monster.

DICKON. Fie! fie! Thou shalt have her.

RAVENSBANE. Have her, Dickon?

DICKON. For lover and wife.

RAVENSBANE. For wife?

DICKON. For wife and all. Thou hast but to obey.

RAVENSBANE. Ah! who will do this for me?

DICKON. I!

RAVENSBANE. Dickon! Wilt make me a man—a man and worthy of her?

DICKON. Fiddledeedee! I make over no masterpieces. Thy mistress shall be Cinderella, and drive to her palace with her gilded pumpkin.

RAVENSBANE. It is the end.

DICKON. What! You'll not?
RAVENSBANE. Never.
DICKON. Harkee, manikin. Hast thou learned to suffer?
RAVENSBANE. (*Wringing his hands.*) O God!
DICKON. *I* taught thee. Shall I teach thee further?
RAVENSBANE. Thou canst not.
DICKON. Cannot—ha! What if I should teach Rachel, too?
RAVENSBANE. Rachel!—Ah! now I know thee.
DICKON. (*Bowing.*) Flattered.
RAVENSBANE. Devil! Thou wouldst not torment Rachel?
DICKON. Not if my lord—
RAVENSBANE. Speak! What must I do?
DICKON. *Not* speak. Be silent, my lord, and acquiesce in all I say.
RAVENSBANE. I will be silent.
DICKON. And acquiesce?
RAVENSBANE. I will be silent.

(*Enter* MINISTER DODGE, *accompanied by* SIR CHARLES REDDINGTON, CAPTAIN BUGBY, *the* REVEREND MASTERS RAND *and* TODD, *and followed by* JUSTICE MERTON, RICHARD, MISTRESS MERTON, *and* RACHEL. RICHARD *and* RACHEL *stand somewhat apart,* RACHEL *drawing close to* RICHARD *and hiding her face. All wear their outer wraps, and two or three hold lanterns, which, save the moon, throw the only light upon the scene. All enter solemn and silent.*)

MINISTER DODGE. Lord, be Thou present with us, in this unholy spot!
SEVERAL MEN'S VOICES. Amen.
DICKON. Friends! Have you seized her?
MINISTER DODGE. Stand from us.
DICKON. Sir, the witch! Surely you did not let her escape?
ALL. The witch?
DICKON. A dame in a peaked hood. She has but now fled the house. She called herself—Goody Rickby.
ALL. Goody Rickby!
MISTRESS MERTON. She here!
DICKON. Yea, mistress, and hath confessed all the damnable art, by which all of us have lately been so terrorized.
JUSTICE MERTON. What confessed she?
MINISTER DODGE. What said she?
DICKON. This: It appeareth that, for some time past, she hath cherished revengeful thoughts against our honored host. Justice Merton.
MINISTER DODGE. Yea, he hath often righteously condemned her!
DICKON. Precisely! So, in revenge, she bewitched yonder mirror, and this very morning unlawfully inveigled this sweet young lady into purchasing it.
SIR CHARLES. Mistress Rachel!
MINISTER DODGE. (*To* RACHEL.) Didst thou purchase that glass?
RACHEL. (*In a low voice.*) Yes.
MINISTER DODGE. From Goody Rickby?
RACHEL. Yes. (*Clinging to* RICHARD.) O, Richard!
MINISTER DODGE. But the image; what was the damnable image in the glass?
DICKON. A familiar devil of hers—a sly imp, who wears to mortal eyes the shape of a scarecrow. It seems she commanded this devil to reveal himself in the glass as my lord's own image, that thus she might wreck Justice Merton's family felicity.
MINISTER DODGE. Infamous!
DICKON. Indeed, sir, it was this very devil whom but now she stole here to consult withal, when she encountered me, attendant here upon my poor prostrate lord, and—held by the wrath in my eye—confessed it all.
SIR CHARLES. Thunder and brimstone! Where is this accursed hag?
DICKON. Alas—gone, gone! If you had but stopped her.
MINISTER DODGE. I know her den—the blacksmith shop. Let us seize her there!
SIR CHARLES. (*Starting.*) Which way?
MINISTER DODGE. To the left.
SIR CHARLES. Go on, there.
MINISTER DODGE. My honored friends, come with us. Heaven shield, with her guilt, the innocent!

(*Exeunt all but* RICHARD, RACHEL, DICKON, *and* RAVENSBANE.)

DICKON. So, then, dear friends, this strange incident is happily elucidated. Bygones, therefore, be bygones. The future brightens—with orange-blossoms. Hymen and Felicity stand with us here ready to unite two amorous and bashful lovers. His lordship is reticent; yet to you alone, of all beautiful ladies, Mistress Rachel—
RAVENSBANE. (*In a mighty voice.*) Silence!
DICKON. My lord would—
RAVENSBANE. Silence! Dare not to speak to her!
DICKON. (*Biting his lip.*) My babe is weaned.

(*He steps back, and disappears, left, in the dimness.*)

RACHEL. (*Still at* RICHARD'S *side.*) Oh, my lord, if I have made you suffer—

RICHARD. (*Appealingly.*) Rachel!

RAVENSBANE. (*Approaching her, raises one arm to screen his face.*) Gracious lady! let fall your eyes; look not upon me. If I dare now speak once more to you, 't is because I would have you know —Oh, forgive me!—that I love you.

RICHARD. Sir! This lady has renewed her promise to be my wife.

RAVENSBANE. Your wife, or not, I love her.

RICHARD. Zounds!

RAVENSBANE. Forbear, and hear me! For one wonderful day I have gazed upon this, your world. A million forms —of trees, of stones, of stars, of men, of common things—have swum like motes before my eyes; but one alone was wholly beautiful. That form was Rachel: to her alone I was not ludicrous; to her I also was beautiful. Therefore, I love her.

RICHARD. Sir!

RAVENSBANE. You talk to me of mothers, mistresses, lovers, and wives and sisters, and you say men love these. What is love? The night and day of the world—the *all* of life, the all which must include both you and me and God, of whom you dream. Well, then, I love you, Rachel. What shall prevent me? Mistress, mother, wife—thou art all to me!

RICHARD. My lord, I can only reply for Mistress Rachel, that you speak like one who does not understand this world.

RAVENSBANE. O, God! sir, and do you? If so, tell me—tell me before it be too late—why, in this world, such a thing as *I* can love and talk of love. Why, in this world, a true man and woman, like you and your betrothed, can look upon this counterfeit and be deceived.

RACHEL and RICHARD. Counterfeit?

RAVENSBANE. Me—on me—the ignominy of the earth, the laughing-stock of the angels!

RACHEL. Are you not Lord Ravensbane?

RAVENSBANE. No, I am *not* Lord Ravensbane. I am a nobleman of husks, bewitched from a pumpkin. I am Lord Scarecrow!

RACHEL. Ah me, the image in the glass was true?

RAVENSBANE. Yes, true. It is the glass of truth—Thank God for you, dear.

DICKON. (*His face only reappearing in the mirror, speaks low.*) Remember! if you dare—Rachel shall suffer for it.

RAVENSBANE. You lie. She is above your power.

DICKON. Still, thou darest not—

RAVENSBANE. Fool, I dare. (RAVENSBANE *turns to* RACHEL. *While he speaks* DICKON'S *face slowly fades and disappears.*) Mistress, this pipe is I. This intermittent smoke holds, in its nebula Venus, Mars, the world. If I should break it—chaos and the dark! And this of me that now stands up will sink jumbled upon the floor—a scarecrow. See I break it. (*He breaks the pipe in his hands, and flings the pieces to the ground; then turns, agonized,* to RACHEL.) Oh, Rachel, could I have been a man—!

(*He sways, staggering.*

RACHEL. Richard! Richard! support him (*She draws the curtain of the mirror just opposite which* RAVENSBANE *has sunk upon the floor. At her cry, he starts up faintly and gazes at his reflection, which is seen to be a normal image of himself.*) Look, look: the glass!

RAVENSBANE. Who is it?

RACHEL. Yourself, my lord—'t is the glass of truth.

RAVENSBANE. (*His face lighting with exalted joy, starts to his feet, erect, before the glass.*) A man! (*He falls back into the arms of the two lovers.*) Rachel!

RICHARD. (*Bending over him.*) Dead!

RACHEL. (*With an exalted look.*) But a man!

THE BOSS

BY

Edward Sheldon

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THE BOSS

The Boss represents the play dealing with political and business interests. Its author, Edward Brewster Sheldon, was born in Chicago, February 4, 1886, the son of Theodore and Mary Strong Sheldon. He graduated from Harvard College in 1907, and took the degree of A.M. from Harvard University in 1908. He had been interested in the writing of plays while an undergraduate, and had his first professional success in little more than a year after graduation.

On November 12, 1908, at the Opera House, Providence, Rhode Island, Mrs. Fiske produced his play, *Salvation Nell,* which was a stage success. A complete list of his plays since then includes *The Nigger,* produced first at the New Theatre, New York City, December 4, 1909; *The Boss* (1911); *Princess Zim-Zim,* played first at the Harmanus Bleecker Hall, Albany, New York, December 4, 1911; *Egypt,* first played at The Playhouse, Hudson, New York, September 18, 1912; *The High Road,* produced first at His Majesty's Theatre, Montreal, Canada, October 14, 1912; *Romance,* played first at Harmanus Bleecker Hall, Albany, February 6, 1913, and *The Garden of Paradise,* first produced at the Park Theatre, November 28, 1914. Mr. Sheldon also dramatized *Das Hohe Lied* of Hermann Sudermann in 1914, under the title of *The Song of Songs,* adapting the original to American conditions. It was, however, not a success from a dramatic standpoint.

The most important plays of Mr. Sheldon are *Salvation Nell, The Nigger, The Boss, Romance,* and *The Garden of Paradise.* In these plays he has treated five quite different themes, and shown a dramatic craftmanship, at times, of a high order. *Salvation Nell* reproduced with fidelity scenes in the street life of New York City, and placed against a background of drunkenness and vice, the work of the Salvation Army. *The Nigger* showed real power in treating the theme of a young Southerner with political ambitions and great family pride who finds that he is of mixed blood. The ending is somewhat inconclusive, but there are portions of the play, such as the letter of the quadroon to her master, which are remarkable pieces of writing.

The Boss was the third of these realistic studies of American life. Business and politics form the background, but the attention of the audience is centred upon the relations of "Regan" and his wife. They are strongly contrasted types and at first glance their union seems impossible. Yet Mr. Sheldon has indicated unobtrusively enough but surely with sufficient definiteness, the inherent attraction which the strength of "Regan" had for "Emily Griswold" and the way

in which her pity and sympathy finally turned to something deeper. The playwright has avoided the temptation to make "The Boss" a hero; he is a very human person, and the acting of Mr. Holbrook Blinn in the part was masterly. For these reasons the play was selected to represent Mr. Sheldon's work, since *Salvation Nell* was hardly available as a play for reading and study, and copyright considerations prevented the inclusion of *Romance*. *Romance* is so far his greatest play, and the remarkable acting of Miss Doris Keane as *Madame Cavallini,* the Italian opera singer whose love story is the theme of the drama, illustrated again the great strength of Mr. Sheldon, his ability as a practical playwright. *Romance* was produced at the Lyric Theatre, London, on September 30, 1915. Miss Keane gave 1128 performances of *Romance* in London and it has been played in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, British India, Egypt, Christiana, Stockholm, and the Swedish Provinces.

The Garden of Paradise is a dramatization of the story of *The Little Mermaid,* by Hans Andersen, with the love note dominant. While this is pure romance, it is, of all Mr. Sheldon's work, most distinctly a piece of literature, and he has shown his versatility in turning from the realistic study to the poetic interpretation of fairy life.

The Boss was first produced at the Garrick Theatre, Detroit, Michigan, January 9, 1911. It was played first in New York City at the Astor Theatre, January 30, 1911.

The Nigger (1910), *Romance* (1914), and *The Garden of Paradise* (1915) have been published by the Macmillan Company. *The Boss* is now printed for the first time from the manuscript especially prepared by Mr. Sheldon for this collection. The editor is indebted to the courtesy of the author for permission to print the play. For details concerning the play he has to thank Mr. Sheldon and his agent, Miss Alice Kauser.

For criticism of *The Boss,* see J. E. Metcalfe, in *Life,* Vol. 57, pp. 308–9, February 9, 1911, and *The Theatre,* Vol. 13, pp. vi–viii, March, 1911.

Note to Third Edition.

To the great loss of our stage, Mr. Sheldon has been suffering from an illness which has prevented him from making any consistent progress in his dramatic work. *The Lonely Heart* was produced in Baltimore on October 24, 1921. *Bewitched,* written in collaboration with Mr. Sidney Howard, opened in New York on October 1, but although there was general critical approval, it did not meet with the popular success it had experienced on the road.

According to *L'Atlantique,* "one of the most recent dramatic works from America, *Romance,* by M. Edward Sheldon, has now become, thanks to the perfect translation of MM. Robert de Flers and François de Croisset, 'une authentique pièce française.'" The first performance in France took place at Théâtre de l'Athénée, Paris, December 24, 1923.

Note to Fourth Edition.

A melodrama, *Lulu Belle*, announced as by Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur, was produced at the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, by David Belasco, January 26, 1926. While there was a certain vividness in the representation of the tenements and the café through which the passion of George Randall pursued the negro harlot, the work was below the standard of Sheldon's other plays.

THE ORIGINAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

In the order of their first appearance

GARRICK THEATRE, DETROIT, MICHIGAN, JANUARY 9, 1911

JAMES D. GRISWOLD, of Griswold and Company, Contractors, Mr. Henry Weave
DONALD GRISWOLD, his son ..... Mr. Howard Estabrool
EMILY GRISWOLD, his daughter ..... Miss Emily Steven
MITCHELL, Mr. Griswold's butler ..... Mr. Henry Sargen
LAWRENCE DUNCAN ..... Mr. Kenneth Hil
MICHAEL R. REGAN, of Regan and Company, Contractors ... Mr. Holbrook Blinn
DAVIS, his private secretary ..... Mr. J. Hammond Dailey
MRS. CUYLER ..... Miss Ruth Benson
GATES, Mrs. Regan's butler ..... Mr. John M. Troughton
"PORKY" MCCOY, Regan's representative in the Fourth Ward .....
..... Mr. H. A. LaMott
SCANLAN ..... Mr. Wilmer Dame
ARCHBISHOP SULLIVAN ..... Mr. Frank Sheridan
A COOK ..... Miss Bella Paul
A FRENCH MAID ..... Miss Rose Wincot
LIEUTENANT OF POLICE ..... Mr. Frank Julian
A POLICE OFFICER ..... Mr. James MacDonald
ANOTHER POLICE OFFICER ..... Mr. H. G. Weil

ACT I

Mr. Griswold's drawing-room, the afternoon of Oct. 28th.

ACT II

Mr. Regan's library. The evening of April 29th.

ACT III

The same. The following morning.

ACT IV

Inspector's room at the Police Station, three days later.

Place—One of the Eastern lake-ports.
Time—Now.

THE BOSS

ACT FIRST.

Griswold's drawing room, the afternoon of Oct. 28th. At the back, double doors leading into the hall, which can be seen when the doors are opened. A newel post and balustrade leading upstairs are also seen in the hall. At right two large windows looking upon the lawn and street beyond. To right—front, near the windows, is a low tea table, at present occupied by cigarette box, ash tray, and flowers. To the right at back is a baby grand piano, facing the windows. Near this is a big grandfather chair. Other chairs, smaller table. In several large vases on tables, piano, and the mantelpiece, are quantities of superb American Beauty roses. They strike the eye at once. At left the fireplace.

As the curtain rises, Griswold is seen walking nervously to and fro. He is a well-bred man of fifty or so, carefully and soberly dressed. He looks very worried, and keeps glancing at his watch. He stops to throw the stump of his cigar into the grate, then lights another and recommences his restless walk. Suddenly he stops at the window, glances out, then goes quickly to the door at back, opens it and listens. The closing of the front door is heard.

GRISWOLD. (*Calling.*) That you, Donald?

DONALD. (*Outside.*) Yes.

GRISWOLD. Come in here.

(DONALD *appears still in his overcoat and gloves, a newspaper under his arm. He is a distinguished-looking, brilliant, eager young man of about thirty. The following scene is to be played at high tension by both men,—sharply, quickly, nervously.*)

Now what did he say?

DONALD. Wait till I shut the door. (*He does so.*)

GRISWOLD. Well?

DONALD. (*Turning.*) It's all right—he says he'll come here at five and talk it over. (*Puts hat and paper on piano.*)

GRISWOLD. (*Infinitely relieved.*) Thank God! You've been just an hour and five minutes. I didn't know what to think!

DONALD. (*Taking off his gloves at piano.*) He kept me waiting. His office is jam full.

GRISWOLD. (*Quickly.*) D'you think the people know, then?

DONALD. Know what?

GRISWOLD. That he's pushed us out of business.

DONALD. (*Takes off his coat, puts it on the piano.*) Not yet. Remember—the Western Amalgamated only went over to him to-day. When did they wire us? About two o'clock?

GRISWOLD. (*Turning away.*) All the rest'll follow suit within a month!

DONALD. (*Takes up newspaper.*) Steady, father!

GRISWOLD. Did you have any chance to talk to him?

DONALD. Not much. He chewed a big cigar and put his feet on the desk, and told me he'd had his eyes on our grain-contracts ever since he began handling freight in '92.

GRISWOLD. Of course he wanted them—why, they're the big reason this city has for existing! Half the wheat that goes into the world gets there through this port!

DONALD. (*Half to himself.*) I wish I'd smashed him in the face—right before his stenographers!

GRISWOLD. (*Walking up and down.*) I've run the business as well as I could. I felt a public responsibility—you know that!

DONALD. And now this Irish tough of an ex-barkeep has come along and swindled and blackjacked and knifed his way up to the place you've—

GRISWOLD. (*Stopping him.*) Don't, my boy, don't! He'll be here in half an hour. We've got to keep cool and think!

DONALD. (*Continuing his own line of thought.*) Why, we could have managed him if we'd been willing to stoop a bit and dabble in his own dirt!

GRISWOLD. (*Desperately.*) We must think—that's it!—think!

DONALD. (*Satirically.*) You could have put him up at the clubs, introduced him to Emily, had him here to the house—I could have clapped him on the back, called him by the first name—(*Angrily.*) That's what he wanted! He'd have paid for that!

GRISWOLD. Donald! Drop it! We've got just an hour to get up something before he comes!

DONALD. But he's a disgrace to the city! He knows it, and he knows we know it, and that's why he hates us so! (*Sharply.*) Father, let me ring him up and tell him we've changed our minds—we'll get on without any arbitrating!

GRISWOLD. Not let him come?

DONALD. Yes. What's the use? He's just doing it to gloat over us. He hopes we're going to crawl and whine! He'd enjoy that!

GRISWOLD. I don't care. I've got to see him and find out if there is n't some way out.

DONALD. There is n't.

GRISWOLD. There must be! My boy, d'you realize what we're in for?

DONALD. Do I?

GRISWOLD. It is n't as if the money were the only thing!

DONALD. (*Soothingly.*) I know that.

GRISWOLD. It's the integrity of the firm—it's my own good name—

DONALD. Please, father!

GRISWOLD. Those notes—those savings-bank notes—what about them? They're due on December 1st. If we fail I can't meet them—those banks'll go under like that— (*Snaps fingers.*)

DONALD. Stop, father, don't!

GRISWOLD. And, Donald, d'you know what those stockholders are going to say? They're going to say, "He was a director—Griswold was a director, and—"

(*Door closes off stage.*)

DONALD. (*Interrupting.*) That sounds like the front door.

GRISWOLD. What—?

DONALD. (*Goes to the door, opens it, listens. Then, reassuringly.*) It's all right! Just Emily.

(EMILY GRISWOLD *appears. She is a brilliant, beautiful, assured young woman of about 28, dressed very simply for the street, wearing furs.*)

EMILY. (*Stopping on seeing them.*) Hello! Whatever made you two come home so early—(*Suddenly.*) Dad, you're ill! You're white as a sheet! Don—(*Frightened.*) Why, what's the matter? What's happened?

DONALD. Nothing. Nothing at all.

EMILY. Yes, there is. Oh, tell me, please, quick!

GRISWOLD. It's all right, dear, Donald and I have to talk business with a man we could n't very well ask to the office, so I suggested his coming here. You are n't expecting anyone to tea, are you?

EMILY. Just Laurie Duncan—he does n't count. (*Still anxiously.*) Oh, dad, you do look dreadfully!

GRISWOLD. Then we can use this room—yes, that would be better than taking him upstairs.

EMILY. Him?

GRISWOLD. You see, it's "Shindy Mike."

EMILY. (*Surprised.*) You don't mean Regan. (*Slight pause. She looks at* DONALD, *then back to* GRISWOLD.) What have you two got to see Regan about?

DONALD. Oh, a lot of things a woman would n't understand.

(*Buries himself in a newspaper.*)

EMILY. Don't be so snappy, Don!

DONALD. (*Over paper.*) You may be all right down in the slums but you're no good when it comes to business. D'you hear? No earthly good!

EMILY. You're evidently in one of your fox-terrier moods to-day.

DONALD. Well, is she, father?

GRISWOLD. (*Nervously,*) Stop squabbling, please.

EMILY. (*Protesting.*) But, dad, I—

GRISWOLD. (*Interrupting.*) How's my young scientific philanthropist? You've spent the whole afternoon in your beloved slums, have n't you? Well, where did you go?

EMILY. (*Taking off her furs.*) Oh, down in the Fourth Ward, around the docks.

GRISWOLD. Regan's district.

(*He becomes lost in his own thoughts.*

EMILY. Yes. Oh, it's too sorrowful. The men spend all their wages on drink so of course the women can't feed the children and they have n't any shoes or coal—think of it!—with the winter coming on! And the worst of it is they don't really care. They just seem tired and listless and they say they can't help it and that I don't understand. Well perhaps I don't, but every time I see

their faces I feel all of a sudden how much the world is carrying on its back, and it makes me want to cry, because there 's so little, so awfully little that I can do to help.

DONALD. That 's perfectly true, so why don't you drop it, Emily, and act like other girls? Those people can get on without you. You 're not so important as all that.

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) As a matter of fact, I 'm awfully important.

DONALD. What?

EMILY. You ought to hear what Mrs. Moriarity said to Mrs. Scanlan about me!

DONALD. Oh!

EMILY. She said if the angels were n't built on my style, not even God could make her go to Heaven!

DONALD. (*Grinning.*) Mrs. Moriarity must be somewhat of a humorist.

EMILY. So don't ask me to stop working —I won't! Not until I have a big club house for the men, and a cooking school for the women—

DONALD. (*Interrupting.*) And an incubator for the children. That it?

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) Yes, that 's it.

GRISWOLD. (*To* DONALD.) Are you sure he said five o'clock?

DONALD. Yes, why? It 's only twenty-five minutes now.

(*Glances at watch and clock and looks out of window.*)

EMILY. (*Annoyed.*) Dad, you have n't listened to one word I 've been saying.

GRISWOLD. (*Rousing himself.*) Have n't I, dear? I 'm awfully sorry, but I 've got so much on my mind.

EMILY. I know it! Something is the matter! Dad, I feel so guilty. I 've spent the whole day down in the ward and you 've been in trouble and I have n't been here to help you. I don't think your Emily 's much good after all. But please forgive her, dear, for my sake, and tell me all about it.

DONALD. (*Warningly.*) Now, father!

GRISWOLD. Nothing, dear. I said so once.

EMILY. Wait a moment—(*Looking up and speaking positively.*) It 's Regan.

DONALD. Now, Emily, we have to talk business, and there is n't much time, so run along, dear, please! D 'you mind?

(*He takes her by her arms and pushes her toward the door.*)

EMILY. (*Shaking him off.*) Yes, of course I mind. I 'm going to stay and hear what you have to say.

DONALD. No, you 're not!

(*Goes to table.*)

EMILY.. Don, stop contradicting me! Even though I *am* a girl, I 'm one of the family and I intend to be consulted whenever anything important is going on!

DONALD. This is private, though. D 'you hear? *Private!*

EMILY. (*Obstinately.*) I don't care if it is or not.

DONALD. (*Fuming.*) Father, make her go away!

GRISWOLD. (*Soothingly.*) Now, dear, please—

EMILY. (*Interrupting suddenly.*) I know what it is! Will you tell me if I 'm right?

DONALD. You don't know anything about it.

EMILY. Don't I, though? Regan 's trying to steal dad's contracts with the grain companies!

DONALD. Emily, you make me tired!

EMILY. (*Turning to* GRISWOLD.) Is n't that right, dear?

GRISWOLD. No.

DONALD. (*To* EMILY, *approvingly.*) There! What did I tell you!

GRISWOLD. (*In dry emotion.*) He *has* stolen them. He 's done us, Emily.

EMILY. (*Gasping.*) What?

DONALD. (*Sharply.*) Father, d 'you think this is wise?

GRISWOLD. She 's got to hear it sooner or later!

EMILY. (*With parted lips.*) You don't mean—the Western—

GRISWOLD. Yes, the Western went over to him to-day.

EMILY. But the others?

GRISWOLD. They 'll follow like sheep. No, we 're finished this time—finished!

(*He turns away quickly.*)

EMILY. (*Rushing to him.*) But, Dad, you must n't give up! You must arrange it with him—discuss it, come to an understanding.

GRISWOLD. That 's why we 've asked him here this afternoon, but—

(*He makes a despairing gesture.*)

EMILY. (*Imploringly.*) Don, can't you manage it somehow?

DONALD. I 'll do my best. (*With a smothered exclamation.*) If we could get him to keep those thieving hands off the Western for one month—only one

month!—could n't I make him lie down and take the count!

EMILY. (*Eagerly.*) How?

DONALD. The easiest thing in the world.

EMILY. Well, tell us.

GRISWOLD. Go on, my boy.

DONALD. I 'd get his men to strike.

EMILY. Get his men to strike? Could you do it?

DONALD. Could I? Good Lord! Why, they 're just like a powder magazine waiting for the match! All they need is a leader who 's studied law and has a little nerve.

GRISWOLD. How many of them are there?

DONALD. Over eight thousand. And sick to death of being rounded up like Texas steers with a gang of toughs for cowboys! I could get after his liquor system, too—the public now does n't even realize he has one!

EMILY. His liquor system?

GRISWOLD. (*Pointing to* EMILY.) There —you see!

EMILY. What is his liquor system, Don?

DONALD. (*Rather impatiently.*) Why, it 's his money that is back of every saloon in the Fourth Ward and each employee who won't leave half his wages on a Regan bar before he goes home Saturday night gets his quit notice when the whistle blows on Monday morning.

EMILY. (*Shocked.*) Is that true?

DONALD. True? Of course it 's true! And that 's just one of the little tricks that have made him what he is to-day!

EMILY. Then *that 's* why the men come home drunk, and the children have no food, and the women say I don't understand.

DONALD. People say that Shindy 's out for the dollar! It 's a lie—he 's out for the dime. And you can take it from me that every penny he owns he 's ripped out of a human heart!

EMILY. Don! Why did n't you tell me this before?

DONALD. What 's the matter?

EMILY. I 've met him!

GRISWOLD. Regan?

DONALD. Where?

EMILY. At a dinner the Streeters gave. He rides in the park. Why, we cantered around the bridle-path twice only this morning!

DONALD. (*In strong reproof.*) Emily!

GRISWOLD. My child!

EMILY. (*Apologetic.*) He—he was n't at all what I 'd expected. Of course he was tough. But there was something—nice about him. (*A movement from* DONALD *and* GRISWOLD.) Really there was—something—oh, I don't know, dad, but—why, he was just like a little boy!

DONALD. (*Bitterly.*) "Little boy"! Rot! You 're a nice sort of a girl, you are—playing around with the crook who 's stolen your father's business.

EMILY. (*Interrupting resentfully.*) Well, I did n't know it, did I? You and dad never open your mouths to me and then when anything happens it 's all my fault! I suppose I—

(MITCHELL *enters.*)

What do you want, Mitchell?

MITCHELL. (*Announcing.*) Mr. Duncan.

(*He holds open the door and* LAWRENCE DUNCAN *comes in. He is a lazy, attractive young man of about twenty-six.*)

DUNCAN. (*Gaily.*) Well, Emily! I 'm glad you don't spend all your time in the Fourth Ward. How-d' you-do, sir? Hello, Don.

DONALD. (*Constrainedly.*) Hello.

DUNCAN. (*Suspiciously.*) Mr. Griswold, have these two been scrapping again? (*To* EMILY.) What 's the matter?

EMILY. You talk as if this were a Peace Conference. (*Looking at* DONALD.) But it is n't!

(*She sits down at the piano.*)

DONALD. (*Returning the look.*) Not by a long shot!

DUNCAN. (*Gaily.*) I believe you! (EMILY *plays piano.* DUNCAN *goes towards her, leaning over piano.*) Please let 's have tea. I 'm awfully hungry.

(DONALD *looks at watch uneasily.*)

EMILY. Tea?

DUNCAN. Yes, you know you promised. (*Suddenly.*) Oh, if you 've forgotten, don't bother. I 'll come another time.

(*He turns to the door.*)

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) Of course! I remember now! (DONALD *signals across to his father that they leave the room.* EMILY *stops playing.*) Sit down, Laurie, and don't be a goose! (*To* GRISWOLD.) When that man appears, I 'll tell Mitchell to send him up to the library.

GRISWOLD. Very well, dear.

EMILY. (*Stopping him.*) Daddy, listen! (*Wistfully.*) So long as you and Don and I are well and have each other, I don't think we ought to worry much

no matter how badly business goes. Do you?

GRISWOLD. (*Coldly.*) My dear, I'm afraid you don't understand these things. (*To* DUNCAN.) Good-bye, my boy. Remember me to your mother.

DUNCAN. Thanks, Mr. Griswold. Good night. (GRISWOLD *goes out.*)

EMILY. Don, will you forgive me?

DONALD. (*Trying to be stern.*) You don't deserve it.

EMILY. (*Coaxingly.*) Not if I promise never, never, *never* to do it again?

DONALD. (*Relaxing into a smile.*) Don't bother! I'll take care of that! Oh, Laurie, shall we have some squash Saturday?

DUNCAN. All right. Bye-bye, old man! (DONALD *goes out, closing the door.*)

EMILY. (*Pressing a bell.*) Oh, dear! I do have such trouble keeping my menfolks in order! (DUNCAN *laughs.*) Don't laugh, Laurie. I'm depressed today.

DUNCAN. (*Sympathetically.*) What's the matter?

EMILY. (*Her voice trembling.*) Life. That's all. Just life.

(MITCHELL *comes in with tea tray.*)

(EMILY *goes to tea table.*) Here comes your precious tea! Never say again I don't keep my word! (*To* MITCHELL.) Have you put on some of those little biscuits Mr. Duncan's so fond of? Oh yes, I see. Thank you.

(MITCHELL *has taken the flowers from the table and put them on the piano, replacing them with the tea tray. Then he goes out quietly.*)

EMILY. (*Filling the tea pot.*) Now pull up the big chair, and we'll have a nice comfy time! You'd better begin by 'fessing up, don't you think?

DUNCAN. (*Obeying her.*) What about?

EMILY. (*Seated, nodding.*) Those roses.

DUNCAN. (*Promptly.*) Not guilty!

EMILY. Don't be absurd! They came just as usual—four huge boxes of them. You might admit it, Laurie, when you see me wearing one.

DUNCAN. I may be a liar, but I have odd moments of telling the truth—honestly I have! And I feel one coming on now.

EMILY. Well, let it come.

DUNCAN. I'm far too hard up to send you American Beauties—at twenty-five a dozen—oh, yes, I've priced them, all right! (*His tone deepening.*) Although you know, Emily, if I could, I'd have you walk on rose leaves for the rest of your life.

EMILY. (*Quickly.*) Rose leaves! Oh, people irritate me so when they talk like that! If you'd seen what I have this afternoon, you'd—(*Checking herself.*) How do you like your tea? Five lumps and cream?

(*He stops, looking at her curiously.*)

DUNCAN. Oh, I don't want any tea, Emily.

EMILY. No tea? Then what did you come for? You said—

DUNCAN. (*Very nervously and obviously bracing himself.*) I came because I wanted to ask you something. I've been trying to get up courage for weeks, but—but—why, there's something about you that frightens me—it always has! For heaven's sake, stop *thinking* a moment, can't you? Emily, don't look at me like that—it's horrible! (*In an outburst.*) Emily, will you marry me? Yes, that's it—I want you to marry me! Now I've done it! (*He wipes his forehead.*)

EMILY. (*In mild reproof.*) Oh, my dear boy!

DUNCAN. Well? What about it?

EMILY. I'm afraid you must n't talk to me that way any more.

DUNCAN. Must n't talk to you that way? Why not?

EMILY. I could n't, that's all. Now let's talk about something else.

DUNCAN. No, we won't—not till we've finished this! I think I've known you long enough, Emily, to say a few things you ought to hear, so I'm going to light right in. You have n't treated me squarely.

EMILY. Why not?

DUNCAN. Just because you're clever and beautiful and know five times as much as most men that's no reason for leading them on.

EMILY. (*Interrupting indignantly.*) I *don't* lead them on!

DUNCAN. (*Positively.*) Yes, you do! You do lead them on! And then when you've got them all tangled up, poor devils, you take delight in turning them down!

EMILY. Oh, that's not fair!

DUNCAN. What if they were n't up on philanthropy, economics, civic responsibility and all that sort of thing? They were mighty fine fellows, some of them! And that counts a whole lot. No, Emily,

I'm afraid now I believe what I used to think I never could—that you haven't any heart, after all!

EMILY. (*Impatiently holding out plate.*) Oh, take a biscuit and stop being silly.

DUNCAN. (*Refusing the plate.*) No, thanks. No biscuit. Everybody said you hadn't, but I've been fool enough to think I knew better. Well, I don't—any more! So good-bye.

(*He rises and goes towards door.*)

EMILY. (*Simply and seriously.*) No, wait. Laurie, you mustn't go like that. You may be right about me—I don't know. I feel that way myself lots of times! And yet I do believe—way down—deep down—I believe there *is* a man waiting for me somewhere, and that I'll know him when he comes along!

DUNCAN. (*Wistfully.*) Don't I look the least bit like him? Couldn't you manage to mistake us in the dark?

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) I'm afraid not, Laurie. (*He turns silently away.*) Oh, please don't be hurt! You've been my best friend for so long I—I don't think I could get on without you now.

DUNCAN. Emily!

EMILY. You know the way I mean. But I wish—d' you mind if I say it? It's only because I'm so fond of you!

DUNCAN. (*Grimly.*) No, go ahead. I can stand anything now.

EMILY. (*Wistfully.*) I wish you'd wake up, Laurie! You've been asleep all your life. Oh, I know you've had a good time, and I like good times so much myself that I feel I ought n't to say a word. But—but there *is* something more. I wish when you walk down the street, everybody would turn and say: "There goes Lawrence Duncan. He's done a lot to help this city. He's a fine man and I'm proud of him!" (*Breaking off.*) I suppose I'm talking nonsense, Laurie, but you know what I mean.

DUNCAN. Yes, of course, I do. You mean why don't I go down there and start basket-ball teams and boxing classes for those kids in the Fourth Ward. Well, I don't know how.

EMILY. (*Wistfully.*) But you could learn.

DUNCAN. I tell you, Emily, it's not in my line.

EMILY. People said that to me, but I went right ahead.

DUNCAN. But I'd just make a fool of myself—everybody I know would be laughing at me.

EMILY. They used to laugh at me—perhaps they still do. The only difference is, I never hear them any more. They seem so far away.

(*She is lost in a sort of dreamy enthusiasm.*)

DUNCAN. (*Uncomfortably.*) Emily, you've been working too hard down there. You're a little bit cracked on that subject—you're morbid, really you are! Now listen, dear. Leave all those dirty people for a little while and come up here where you belong.

EMILY. Do you mean that?

DUNCAN. Of course I mean it.

EMILY. (*After a slight pause.*) Then there's no use talking any more.

(*Enter* MITCHELL.)

MITCHELL. Mr. Regan, madam. He says Mr. Griswold is expecting him.

EMILY. Mr. Regan? Oh, yes. Put him in the reception-room, Mitchell, until I go upstairs. Then bring him in here. I'll tell Mr. Griswold. (MITCHELL *bows.*) And Mr. Duncan is going.

(MITCHELL *holds open the door, hesitates. Then, seeing that* DUNCAN *is not going, he disappears.*)

DUNCAN. "Shindy Mike"?

EMILY. (*Nodding.*) Yes, it's business. That's why I'm so worried.

DUNCAN. (*Smiling.*) When *he* walks down the street everybody turns and looks at *him*—

EMILY. (*Interrupting and smiling.*) Ssh! Be quiet! He's out there in the hall! Good-bye. Come to dinner Thursday. Will you?

DUNCAN. If you want me?

EMILY. I do!

DUNCAN. Then of course I shall. (*He kisses her hands lightly before she can take them away.*) God bless you, dear!

(*He goes out.* EMILY, *with a sigh, goes to the piano, takes up her furs and gloves, and turns to the door. Just as she reaches it there is the sound of voices outside in the hall.*)

REGAN'S VOICE. (*Outside.*) That's O. K. Here's a dollar fer ye—g'wan and take it! Ye won't? All right, I'm goin' in anyway.

(REGAN *walks in, putting a bill back in his pocket. On seeing* EMILY *he stops in sudden embarrassment, and smiles.*)

REGAN. Pardon me, Miss Griswold. I thought I'd just step in an' ask ye how ye was feelin' after yer ride.

EMILY. I believe my father's expecting you, Mr. Regan. If you'll wait I'll send him down.

REGAN. (*Shyly stopping her.*) Say, Miss Griswold, would you mind sittin' here while I talk to ye fer a minute? I won't keep ye long.

EMILY. I'm afraid I can't, Mr. Regan. Good afternoon.

REGAN. Good afternoon, Miss.

(*She goes out at the back of the stage without looking at him or smiling.* REGAN *is left to himself. He is a man of about 38, the Irish-American bull-dog type, talks and looks like the tough who has risen to a great position and is not yet at home in it. He is apt to be too polite and ceremonious, but when he is moved or excited this drops easily away. He is elaborately dressed in a morning coat, with a gardenia in his buttonhole. He wears a diamond scarfpin, and is very conscious of his clothes. After* EMILY *goes he begins looking about the room, notices the flowers with a good deal of satisfaction. He looks at himself in the mirror, straightens his tie, and then glances suddenly at the door to see if he has been detected. He consults his watch, just as the door opens and* GRISWOLD *and* DONALD *come in.*)

GRISWOLD. Mr. Regan.

REGAN. (*Shaking hands effusively.*) Glad t' see ye, sir. An' the young man, too—(*shakes hands with* DONALD) glad t' see ye!

GRISWOLD. (*Coldly.*) Sit down, Mr. Regan. I don't want to take too much of your valuable time.

REGAN. (*Genially.*) Aw, there's no rush! I got all day! (*There is a silence,* GRISWOLD *and* DONALD *exchange glances.* REGAN *realizes that he is being criticized. He turns ugly in a moment.*) Well, if you two gents is so strong for business, let's get at it. Ye asked me t' come. Here I am. What d' ye want?

GRISWOLD. All right, Mr. Regan, I'll go straight to the point. I've been handling all the grain that's landed in this city for nearly twenty-five years. Since '95 you've managed to get hold of the freight contracts. You were on the inside of dock-life. You knew how to manage those men. You could make them work for an impossible wage. Well, you've succeeded and now you naturally want the grain contracts, too. I've done my best, but I'm afraid I've been too conservative to fight the conditions you've created.

(*During this speech* REGAN *has lighted a huge cigar, which he puffs arrogantly.*)

REGAN. You mean I'm a grafter an' a thief, but ye'll be damned if yer one, too. That it?

GRISWOLD. (*Smiling.*) You have a clear way of putting things, Mr. Regan. Well, I heard to-day from the Western Amalgamated that you've offered them terms I can't possibly meet. All the smaller companies will follow the Western, of course. Mr. Regan, you've beaten me. You control the grain-handling business of this country.

REGAN. (*Leaning back.*) Well, what are ye goin' t' do about it?

GRISWOLD. Wait just a moment! I want to make the situation perfectly clear. For a good many years I've been rather prominent in the direction of three very important savings-banks—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) The People's Trust, the Union Deposit, and the Farmers' Loan. An' they put up the money you've been fightin' me with. Ye got in securities that won't be worth the paper they're wrote on—(GRISWOLD *and* DONALD *exchange a quick look*) if ye lose that fight. An' ye *have* lost it, Griswold! I've smashed ye an' ye know it! Ye'll file yer petition within a week—they'll be a run on those banks an' they'll go t' hell so quick they'll never know what's struck 'em. That it?

GRISWOLD. (*Inarticulately.*) That's it. How did you find out?

REGAN. How do I find out anythin'? I pound an' pay until they cough it up—see?

GRISWOLD. If you take over my credit now you'll shake the credit of the whole state.

REGAN. I don't give a Bronx cocktail fer the credit o' the state. The wheat's got t' be handled an' s' long's I got that I can hang on through any run that ever happened. An' what's more, I'll make good money doin' it!

GRISWOLD. Mr. Regan—

REGAN. (*Leaning forward.*) But you can't. Say, d' ye know where a run

would land *you?* In state's prison, with a steady job as laundry-man a-washin' underwear.

GRISWOLD. But my securities—

REGAN. Aw hell! D' ye think a jury o' reformed porch climbers is goin' t' believe them securities was any better when ye gave 'em than they are now? Hear me laugh! Ha! Ha! No, ye was a director an' ye used the bank's funds to float yer own business an' ye got left. That 's how it 'll look on the front page o' the one-cent daily! Remember that Omaha man—what was his name? Kimball—Kendall? He got twenty fer a deal enough like yours t' be its long-lost brother! An' that was before the days o' *Collier's Weekly,* too—Gawd bless its little soul!

GRISWOLD. (*Sternly.*) I was inside the law. If anything happens it was only a set of circumstances—why, I 'd have cut off my hand before I—

DONALD. (*Warningly.*) Father!

(GRISWOLD *subsides.*)

REGAN. (*Contemptuously.*) Aw, go tell that t' the birdies in the park! 'T ain't what ye *do* that counts in this world. It 's what folks *think* ye done!

GRISWOLD. Look here, Regan, give me six months before taking over the Western. I have some loans coming in. I can stick it through by then. Six months!

REGAN. Nixy—too long.

GRISWOLD. (*Quickly.*) Four!

REGAN. (*Briskly.*) Not on yer gay young life!

GRISWOLD. One—only one! It can't hurt you! At the end you 'll get the business just the same!

REGAN. (*Enjoying himself.*) Yeah, but I think I ought t' be makin' a moral example of ye. Guy with swell position, born with a silk hat, looks down on Irish up-starts, turns the whole block into an ice house when he meets 'em on the street—

GRISWOLD. (*Protesting.*) Mr. Regan—

DONALD. Let him go on, father.

REGAN. What d' ye think the depositors in them banks are going t' think about yer principles when they find that all their savin's have gone bla-a-h? Why, th' Fourth Ward alone 's got over two thousand accounts in the People's Trust! Sure, they 're only Irish hooligans that would n't know a cream-de-menth from a grand piano, but what are ye goin' t' tell 'em, Mr. Griswold, when they up and smash yer beak off on yer way to jail?

GRISWOLD. That 'll do!

DONALD. (*To* REGAN.) Yes, Regan, I guess we 've had enough.

REGAN. Aw gee, the trouble with you patent-leather slobs is ye can't tell a joke when ye get it in th' eye! Now I 'm not tryin' t' do ye—I 'm not, s' 'elp me Gawd! Wot d' ye say to a—a compromise?

GRISWOLD. (*Eagerly.*) Compromise?

REGAN. Wot d' ye say t' a bunch-up o' the two firms!

GRISWOLD. Bunch-up?

REGAN. Sure! Take hold good an' hard, spit on 'em, squeeze 'em t'gether, an' out she comes—"Regan, Griswold & Co."! Naw, damn it, yer gettin' t' be an old man an' the drinks is on me. "Griswold, Regan & Co. Contractors"! (DONALD *and* GRISWOLD *exchange glances of amazement.*) There! How does that sound?

GRISWOLD. Amalgamation?

REGAN That 's it, but my mouth 's too full o' teeth t' say it. Gee, could n't we give this town a hunch, you an' me? I wonder! You 'd supply the polish an' the style, talk it up big with the church members an' first families, an' meanwhile I 'd be round in the back yard with my coat off, a-doin' the *work!*

GRISWOLD. You mean the new firm would be run by you according to your present successful standards, while I 'd be in front to keep the people from examining too closely into what we were doing? That it?

REGAN. Straight in the bull's eye. Well?

DONALD. You can't do it, father!

GRISWOLD. I know all about that, but I must think of those small depositors.

DONALD. That 's beyond us, father. We can't help them. But here 's a man asking you to come down from the principles on which you based your life and brought us up—to come down to his own dirty tricks. There 's only one answer to a man like that, father, and that 's the door!

REGAN. (*Angrily.*) Oh, that 's yer line o' talk, is it? (*Controls himself with difficulty.*) No, I won't let ye get a rise out o' me—we got too much t' settle. Griswold, if ye come in with me on this I 'll let ye manage the business any way ye like—I don't care how honest ye make it! Oh, we 'll lose money, o' course, but Gawd above us! Money ain't everythin' 'Specially when ye got a nice bunch o'

real estate up-town, a-ripenin' away like bananas in a dago's bed.

GRISWOLD. (*Suspiciously.*) D' you mean you 'll be willing to take the lead from me?

REGAN. Sure! I 'll jump in an' give morality a good fair show. After all, times is changin', an' it may pay now better 'n it used to!

GRISWOLD. In that case, I 'm inclined to say I—

REGAN. (*Quickly.*) Ye 'll take me up? Good! Shake on it! (*Enthusiastically seizing his hand.*) This is a great day for Mike Regan all right, all right!

DONALD. Wait a second, father. What 's he letting us down so easy for? (*Looking at* REGAN.) Why, he 's got us nailed and he knows it!

GRISWOLD. Donald, I don't think you quite appreciate all Mr. Regan is offering—

DONALD. (*Interrupting.*) Yes, I do, and I don't like it—not one litt'e bit! (*Turning to* REGAN.) There 's something else. Why don't you lay it on the table and be done with it? (*A pause.*)

REGAN. (*Ill at ease, throwing away his cigar.*) Yer a smart kid, ain't ye? Wish I had a couple like ye in the office. Well, ye 've called my bluff an' I don't mind showin' my hand.

(*He hesitates.*)

GRISWOLD. Go on.

DONALD. The whole thing—mind!

(*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*Struggling in his embarrassment.*) It 's hard to say somehow—I dunno why it should be. Ye see, Mr. Griswold, I did n't care nothin' about squarin' things this way when I started in t' grab yer business.

DONALD. I believe you. Go on.

REGAN. But I 've been thinkin' now I 'd like t' make up good an' close t' ye, 'cause— (*He stops.*)

DONALD. (*Sharply.*) Well? Because what?

REGAN. 'Cause I want t' ask yer daughter if by any chance she 'd mind bein'—Mrs. R.

GRISWOLD. What?

REGAN. Marry me—that 's wot!

(*There is a moment of stupefaction.*)

DONALD. (*Enraged.*) Well, this is the finishing touch!

REGAN. (*Ugly.*) I tell ye it 's yer only chanst.

GRISWOLD. (*Controlling himself.*) That 's all, Mr. Regan. Don't let us keep you.

REGAN. (*In all the glory of his toughness.*) Aw, ye t'ink youse hell, don't ye?

DONALD. Get out that door!

REGAN. I 'll learn ye, ye bunch o' stuck-up high-brows! I 'll learn ye that I 'm it an' yer nit!

DONALD. Oh, we all know what you can do and we don't care, but if you 're not gone in one minute I 'll call the butler and have him kick you down the front steps!

REGAN. (*Doggedly.*) I came here with a proposition, an' two hundred bloody butlers could n't bounce me before I get an answer.

GRISWOLD. You 've got it, Mr. Regan.

REGAN. Not from her.

DONALD. Don't you dare say her name!

REGAN. (*Whining indignantly.*) Why not? Damn it, ain't I askin' her t' marry me?

DONALD. (*About to attack him.*) You—

(*Enter* EMILY.)

EMILY. Dad, has—(*She stops on seeing Regan.*) Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you and Don were alone.

GRISWOLD. (*Trying to be polite.*) Mr. Regan is leaving, dear. In just a few moments!

DONALD. Go away, Emily. Please!

(EMILY *starts to obey and is arrested by* REGAN'S *voice.*)

REGAN. Pardon me, Miss Griswold, do ye mind comin' in fer a minute an' shuttin' the door.

GRISWOLD. That 'll do, dear, we 'll excuse you.

DONALD. (*Irritated.*) Go away, Emily!

REGAN. (*Gently.*) Will you come in an' sit down? (*She looks at him, pauses, hesitates.*) I 'm askin' ye t' sit down.

(*She hesitates again, then still looking at him, obeys.*)

DONALD. Well, of all the—Emily, dad and I won't want you here! We 've said so twice and—

REGAN. (*Breaking in.*) I guess I 'm the one t' do the talkin'. Listen to me, Miss Griswold.

EMILY. (*Raising her eyebrows.*) I 'm listening, Mr. Regan.

(*Pause.* DONALD *and* GRISWOLD *are amazed.*)

REGAN. (*Hesitatingly.*) I ain't seen ye more 'n four times, but I 'm no horse-car when it comes t' makin' up my mind. I 'm thirty-eight years old, an' never had a sick day in my life, 'cept when some

guy laid me out scrappin' an' mostly I can say it 's been the other way round. I drink now an' then, but havin' been a bar-keep when young, I know t' a finger how much I can carry, so I never throw in no more. I never gamble nor play the races, fer the simple reason they seem kind o' slow 'long side o' my business. An' I never got mixed up with women o' any size or color 'cause I been on the jump, I s'pose, an' they tell me women takes a lot o' time. But now I 'm gettin' along, an' I 've made my pile, an' I feel like settlin' down an' havin' someone pour my coffee in the morning an' put my slippers on the steam-heater at night.

EMILY. (*Leaning forward.*) You mean—

REGAN. I guess yer wise, I want t' marry ye.

DONALD. To get a social position for his dirty politics!

REGAN. (*Sternly.*) Young feller, I can put this through without no buttin' in—understan'? (*To* EMILY.) Ye could help me, Miss Griswold, an' I ain't ashamed t' say it. But that ain't the reason why I want ye.

EMILY. (*Calmly.*) Is n't it, Mr. Regan? Suppose you tell me, then, what is?

REGAN. I love ye—(*Controlling himself.*) Well, that 's why.

(*She shrinks a little and looks at him fixedly until* DONALD *speaks.*)

DONALD. Yes, and he 's offered to buy you. He 's got us right against the wall and he says he 'll let us off. He 's offered father a partnership, promised to back him up in everything.

EMILY. What?

DONALD. And it 's all on the condition that we pass you over like a Van Dyck portrait, for that man to hang in his drawing-room.

EMILY. (*With a little smile.*) Dear old dad! Don! If we 're going to the poor-house, then at least we 'll make it a family party!

DONALD. (*Triumphantly.*) Ah, I knew you 'd say that! We can't help a smash-up! It 's not our fault if the banks go under!

EMILY. Banks go under?

DONALD. And anyway, Regan, there 's no use your staying here now, so move along there and be quick about it.

EMILY. Banks go under? (*To* DONALD.) What do you mean?

DONALD. Oh, for heaven's sake, don't bother, dear! It 's all right—I mean, you can't do anything!

EMILY. But I don't understand. And I want to, Don. I intend to.

DONALD. Drop it, dear—please.

EMILY. Dad—?

DONALD. (*Warningly.*) Now, father!

GRISWOLD. Wait until later, Emily.

EMILY. Mr. Regan, do *you* know anything about this?

REGAN. (*Briefly.*) I know the whole blamed thing.

EMILY. Then tell me, please.

DONALD. Don't listen to him, dear! He 's got it all wrong, and—

REGAN. (*Grimly.*) Oh, have I? I don't know 'bout that! (*To* EMILY.) Your father 's borrowed money from three big savin's-banks. He just *happens* t' be a d'rector in 'em all! When he goes bankrupt, that 'll start a run. They 'll stop payment—

EMILY. Stop payment?

REGAN. Yeah, an' all them scoopers o' mine that yer so stuck on—they 'll lose ev'ry bit o' dough they 've managed t' scrape t'gether.

EMILY. You don't mean—

REGAN. Sure. They got their cash in the People's Trust—the steady ones, I mean. It 's the only savin's bank the Fourth Ward patronizes. Well, it 's just that very cash yer pa here borrowed, an' if he can't pay it back—why, they get left! See? (*Pause.*)

EMILY. (*Turning to* GRISWOLD.) Dad, is this true?

GRISWOLD. In a measure, yes.

EMILY. And all those men down there are going to lose their money?

GRISWOLD. (*Hesitating.*) There may be —some difficulty. I don't deny that, but—

EMILY. (*Gently interrupting.*) But daddy, dear, they have so little. It means everything to them. And we—why, we 're responsible, don't you see?

GRISWOLD. (*Defending himself.*) It 's a tremendous misfortune as far as they go, but I acted with the strictest honesty and I don't see—

EMILY. (*Interrupting him and turning to* REGAN.) Is n't there anything else you 'll take? Won't you offer that partnership on any other basis?

REGAN. I guess not. What would I be gettin'?

DONALD. Partnership? D' you think father would consider for a minute any-

EMILY. (*Interrupting, speaking to* REGAN.) He 's right. Father won't do it now. But would you be satisfied with half the grain companies, putting the other half entirely in his hands? Would you promise to go ahead under that arrangement and leave him *absolutely* alone?

REGAN. Yeah, but what about me? Will him and that young feller promise t' leave *me* alone?

EMILY. (*Haughtily.*) Mr. Regan, I think you can rely on my family's doing the honest thing.

REGAN. (*After a moment of hesitation.*) All right. I 'll give 'em half, that 's square. Is it a deal now? Take me up?

EMILY. (*A little wildly.*) I 've got to! There 's nothing else for me to do!

DONALD. (*Appalled.*) Emily, don't be a fool!

GRISWOLD. D' you know what you 're saying, my child?

REGAN. (*Deeply moved, holding out his hand.*) Put it there, Miss! Put it there, an' shake!

GRISWOLD. (*Strongly.*) My dear!

DONALD. For heaven's sake, Emily, think who you are!

EMILY. I can't! All I can think of are the men who have their hard earned little accounts in those banks! You have n't seen their wives and children. You don't know the misery they 're struggling under. But *I 've* seen it. *I* know! And anything I can do to keep those pitiful little families from giving up and going all to pieces, why I intend to do it! And nothing that you or father or anybody else can say is going to stop me!

DONALD. (*To* REGAN.) You hear that? Tell her you don't want her! Tell her you won't take her! You tell her or I 'll—

REGAN. Aw, g' wan! You smoke too many cigarettes!

DONALD. (*Beside himself.*) You—

GRISWOLD. Donald! Keep quiet! The servants!

DONALD. (*Lowering his voice.*) I can see now! You 've cooked this whole thing up! You 've been meeting on the sly, trying to carry on an affair! You know we 'd never let you marry him, so you make him get a strangle-hold on father's business and then you think you 've got us gagged and bound!

REGAN. (*Flaming.*) You cut that now!

DONALD. You think I 'm afraid of you, Regan, but I 'm not. And I tell you now, right between the eyes, if you go on with this dirty scheme to get hold of my sister, I 'll—

REGAN. (*As he pauses.*) Well, wot 'll ye do?

DONALD. (*Ominously.*) Wait and see.

EMILY. (*Warningly.*) Remember, Don. If Mr. Regan does n't interfere with you, you have no right to interfere with him. That 's settled.

DONALD. (*Desperately.*) You 're crazy! Give it up! Emily! Darling!

EMILY. I can't.

DONALD. D' you realize what you 're doing? You 're choosing between us,—yes, you are! It 's dad and I against this man!

EMILY. (*Passionately.*) I 'm *not* choosing! Oh, Don, dear, can't you *see?*

DONALD. I can see you 're a base, disloyal, little—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Quit pickin' on her now! I 've stood here long enough a-listenin' t' yer gab, and if that 's the line o' talk ye hand out at home, I don't blame her fer wantin' t' beat it! Gee, the only thing that jolts me is she ain't skipped before!

DONALD. (*Turning to* GRISWOLD.) Come along, father. I 've had enough of this.

REGAN. (*Facetiously.*) Don't let me keep ye!

DONALD. (*To* EMILY.) As for you—(*Checking himself.*) We 'll talk about it later.

(*He goes out with a final look at* REGAN.)

GRISWOLD. (*To* EMILY.) Coming, dear?

EMILY. No, I have several things to talk over with Mr. Regan.

GRISWOLD. (*Quietly.*) Then I 'll stay.

EMILY. (*With difficulty.*) Please don't.

GRISWOLD. You mean—(*Looking at* REGAN.) I 'd be in the way?

EMILY. (*Barely able to control herself.*) Yes. (*Pause.*)

GRISWOLD. (*Inarticulately.*) I 'm sorry—I 'm—

(*He waits a moment, straightens himself, and goes without looking back.*)

EMILY. (*As soon as the door shuts, with a despairing sob.*) Daddy! Daddy!

REGAN. (*With rough tenderness.*) I 'm awful sorry fer ye, Miss, but they 'll come round all right, if ye just sit tight. They always do, an'—

EMILY. (*Interrupting him.*) Before we go further I must make you understand one thing. I don't care for you. I feel quite sure I never can. We've got to face that fact together, you and I.

REGAN. Well?

EMILY. (*Bravely.*) I'll keep my word. I'll—I'll marry you. But if I do, it's with the understanding that everything stops at the church door. I won't really be your wife. I can't. That's all there is to it, I—I can't—(*He comes towards her.*) No, wait till I've finished. You were perfectly right when you called it a deal. I'll help you with my position. I'll do the best I can for you that way—

REGAN. (*Pained.*) Aw quit it!

EMILY. (*Closing her eyes and going on.*) And in return you'll let go my father. I'm perfectly above-board, perfectly clear. Just an every day bargain. If you want me—on that basis, remember! —you can have me. (*Looking at him.*) Well?

REGAN. (*After a pause.*) That's a pretty sharp offer yer makin' me, but—I don't care, I'll close with it now!

EMILY. You don't mean—you'll take those terms?

REGAN. I take what I can get—see? And then I get a little more.

EMILY. You won't this time—

REGAN. (*Lightly.*) I'll run the chanst!

EMILY. (*Controlling herself.*) Very well, then, there's nothing more to be said. My family are going to make trouble, so I think we'd better finish it up as soon as we conveniently can.

REGAN. I'll get the license, t'night. We'll be married the first thing in the mornin'. That suit ye?

EMILY. Could you make it in the afternoon, about three? I have a luncheon engagement.

REGAN. Sure. I'll have everythin' ready an' O. K. an' meet ye on the steps o' St. Patrick's at five minutes to.

EMILY. (*Suddenly.*) Mr. Regan, change your mind! Don't do it! Let me off! Please! Oh, please!

REGAN. (*Passionately.*) I won't! (*In an outburst.*) I won't let ye off! I won't! (*He tries to take her in his arms.*)

EMILY. (*Shuddering and turning away.*) Remember—

REGAN. (*Controlling himself with a mighty effort.*) All right. It's three sharp, then. (*He goes to door.*)

EMILY. Three sharp.

REGAN. (*His hand on the knob.*) Don't keep me waitin'.

EMILY. I'm always prompt.

REGAN. (*With an irrepressible smile.*) Oh, before I go, there's one thing I want t' thank ye fer. (*Shyly.*) That rose o mine yer wearin'—t' was lookin' at that kept my nerve up all the time!

EMILY. So it's been you—!

REGAN. Sure. I thought you'd caugh on long ago.

EMILY. (*Bitterly, as she unpins the rose.*) No. I had n't "caught on"!

(*As she speaks he goes out, softly closing the door behind him. She throws the rose on tea table.*)

ACT SECOND.

REGAN'S *library, the evening of April 29th It is a new, elaborate, and obviously ex pensive room, controlled, however, b good taste. On right three long win dows with heavy brocaded curtains. A right, above the windows and facin down-stage, a door leading to* REGAN' *office. At back a recessed fireplace an seats on both sides of it. At left, dor leading to the hall and the rest o the house reached by a step and landing The wall space above and below thi door is occupied by bookcases, filled b expensive bindings. At right-centre half facing the audience, a long librar table, with lamps, papers, and writin materials, also a desk telephone and tray containing whiskey glasses and syphon. Behind it stands a large cha and in front of it a wide comfortabl couch. Near the windows is anothe smaller table with a lamp. The lightin is soft and restful.*

As the curtain rises, DAVIS, REGAN'S *sec retary,—a small, worn, little man,— discovered hunting about among th papers on the desk.—From the le comes the sound of people laughing an talking. Then the door opens, showin brilliant lights and increased noise o talk and laughter, and* REGAN *enters fu tively, closing the door behind him. H is in evening dress.*

REGAN. Say! That guy ain't come i with the ultimatum?

DAVIS. No, sir, not yet. I—I'm afrai I'm in the way here.

REGAN. Aw, that's O. K. I got throug

another dinner, Davis. I'm gettin' better every day. They'll have me smokin' cigarettes first thing I know. Say, we got a swell bunch there t'night. Gee, it makes me sweat t' talk t' 'em, though! I just sneaked in here a minute t' cool down. Well, I suppose I might as well be gettin' back on me book job.

DAVIS. Book job?

REGAN. Yeah, I'm gettin' lit'rary, Davis. (*Looking at book shelves.*) I've read from there to there. Wot are ye after?

DAVIS. I'm hunting for that interview with young Griswold in the *Record-Times*.

REGAN. The one tellin' how he organized his Labor Union an' got our men t' strike?

DAVIS. Yes, sir.

REGAN. G'wan! I used that t' light a cigar.

DAVIS. All right, sir. Then I've finished for to-night?

REGAN. Go home and get some sleep. Ye need sleep when we got a big scrap on like this.

DAVIS. That's what my wife says, too.

REGAN. Say, how are the kids?

DAVIS. Fine, sir. The new school's exactly what they needed. (*Nervously.*) We—we never can thank you as you ought to be thanked for—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Aw, rats! Now don't begin on that again. I did n't do nothin' but write a check, an'—

(*The door opens and* MRS. CUYLER *comes in quickly. She is a fashionable young woman—outspoken, though kindly. She is in evening dress.*)

MRS. CUYLER. I saw you escape, Mr. Regan, and I just made up my mind I would n't let you!

REGAN. Well, ye see, Mrs. Cuyler, I'm expectin' a visit from one o' them strikers. They're sendin' me wot they call their Union Ultimatum! (*To* DAVIS.) Good-night, son.

DAVIS. (*Going out.*) Good-night, sir.

MRS. CUYLER. The strike? Oh, how exciting! I'm just back from Europe, but I hear it's been the talk of the town for two months!

REGAN. (*Proudly.*) Yeah. We've kept things going at quite a clip.

MRS. CUYLER. Tell me—how's it all going to end? Will you up and crush your brother-in-law or will your brother-in-law up and crush you? Oh, I do hope somebody's crushed!

REGAN. (*Opening humidor.*) Then ye'd better get out yer handkerchief fer him! They did n't call me "Shindy Mike" for nothin'. I never got licked by a bunch o' scoopers before an' I guess I'm too old to begin.

(*He takes out a long black cigar and sticks it in his mouth.*)

MRS. CUYLER. (*Clapping her hands impulsively.*) That's splendid! Keep it up! (*She comes to the sofa.*)

REGAN. Aw, g'wan! Yer kiddin' me!

MRS. CUYLER. No, I'm not. I don't think I dare. I've always been so afraid of you, Mr. Regan. I believe you were the original Bogey that my nurse used to frighten me with when I would n't go to sleep—long ago! But now I've seen you I'm disappointed, because you're not a Bogey at all. You're just a—a—

REGAN. Well, cut it loose!

MRS. CUYLER. A man! A rather bad man, I suppose, but oh dear! that only makes me envy Emily the more!

REGAN. Envy her?

MRS. CUYLER. There's so much she can do to help you, Mr. Regan. And the men we help the most are the men we love the best, after all!

REGAN. Help me? I wish she would! I want t' be helped—an' I would n't mind a little lovin', too.

MRS. CUYLER. (*Cheerfully.*) Give her time, Mr. Regan. Emily's a wonderful girl, even if she is a snob.

REGAN. A snob?

MRS. CUYLER. Yes. Morally, I mean. And on the whole you're such a shady character, I don't blame the poor dear if she's mixed up at the start.

REGAN. No, I don't blame her neither—when I stop t' think.

MRS. CUYLER. (*Reflectively.*) It *is* rather hard on her, you know, having you swear at that wretched butler before all her guests.

REGAN. (*Proudly.*) Why, I only did it twice!

MRS. CUYLER. Twice!

REGAN. Well, I guess that's somethin'! I used t' cuss him every time he passed me the pertaters!

MRS. CUYLER. Oh, dear! (*She laughs, then more seriously.*) Mr. Regan, will you do something for me?

REGAN. (*Suspiciously.*) Wot d' ye want?

MRS. CUYLER. Be humane! Light that cigar and kill it quickly! Don't torture it any more!

REGAN. (*Laughing.*) Guess ye think I can't even be decent to a piece o' tobacco!

(*He throws his cigar in the grate.*)

MRS. CUYLER. (*Comfortably.*) Well, Mr. Regan, you really are a very black sheep! Do you know I could hardly make my husband come to dine with you to-night? He said he wanted to go to that big mass-meeting. It's quite true! I had to be unusually firm with him!

REGAN. (*Grimly.*) Poor feller! Tell him he can go t' the meetin' later on and yell "T' hell with Regan!" all the louder fer havin' lapped up my champagne. (*At sofa.*)

MRS. CUYLER. And your old friend, the Archbishop. Emily said he was taken ill at the last moment, so *he* could n't come. But I don't believe it, Mr. Regan, do you? I think he was annoyed because your men broke into that Union saloon this afternoon and sort of accidentally killed the proprietor.

REGAN. Well, it don't seem to bother *you* much.

MRS. CUYLER. Oh, nothing ever bothers me. You see, I 'm just a fan. I never get right down and play. But from the grandstand I see most of the fine points of the game. And that 's why, Mr. Regan, you and Emily are very near my heart this evening.

(*Enter* GATES.)

GATES. Beg pardon, madam, but Mr. Cuyler is leaving. Mrs. Regan asked me to tell you.

MRS. CUYLER. What nonsense! Why, it 's barely nine! Very well, I 'll be there directly. (*Piano is heard in the next room.*) Are n't husbands bores?

REGAN. I s'pose—I s'pose we are.

MRS. CUYLER. No, not you! You 're lots of things, but—I think there 's no danger of your boring any one! You know, Mr. Regan, I must be fearfully immoral! I enjoy so much what I entirely disapprove of. You, for instance. (*He looks at her.*) Now, Emily can't do that—never could! It seems too bad, and yet—and yet I somehow think it 's going to be the making of you both!

REGAN. Mrs. Cuyler, would you mind helpin' me do somethin'?

MRS. CUYLER. What is it?

REGAN. (*Taking two jewelers' boxes from his pocket.*) Tell me which one of these she 'd like the best.

(*He gives the larger one to her.*)

MRS. CUYLER. (*Opening the box.*) What 's this? A frog—a diamond frog with ruby eyes!

REGAN. (*Proudly.*) I picked out that! Sort o' cute, ain't he? Kind o' natural! Pipe his leg there! O' course live frogs are green with spots all over 'em but that don't make no diff'rence when it comes t' joolry, does it?

MRS. CUYLER. (*Trying not to laugh.*) Not a bit. I think he 's sweet, Mr. Regan. What 's the other?

REGAN. (*Contemptuously.*) Aw—just a pearl ring. (*Showing box to her.*) The guy at the store was nutty over it, but gee! It seems kind o' cheap t' me, 'long side the other!

MRS. CUYLER. It 's beautiful.

REGAN. That so? Well, I 'm strong for diamonds, speakin' fer myself. They give the wealthy look, an' ain't that what everybody 's after?

MRS. CUYLER. Mr. Regan.

REGAN. Yeah?

MRS. CUYLER. I 'd give her the one you chose yourself. I 'd give her the frog.

(*Hands back boxes.*)

REGAN. (*Pleased.*) All right. I will.

MRS. CUYLER. What is it? Her birthday?

REGAN. Naw. We was married six months ago t'day. I just want her to know that I remembered, that 's all. Listen! D' you hear her playin' in there? It makes me kind o'—kind of homesick fer some place I 've never seen.

(*A pause.*)

MRS. CUYLER. You will, Mr. Regan, before so very long. Good-bye, God bless you, "Shindy Mike"!

(*She smiles at him swiftly, waves her hand and goes out. He stands for a moment looking after her.*)

(GATES *enters by the other door.*)

GATES. I beg pardon, sir.

REGAN. That striker shown up yet?

GATES. No, sir, it 's Mr. McCoy.

REGAN. McCoy? Where?

GATES. There in the office, sir. He rang the side bell, and I thought as you—

REGAN. What right have you got t' think I 'll do all the thinkin' that goes on

this house! (*Turning to door.*) Come in here, Porky!

(GATES *has held the door open for* McCOY, —*a good-looking, reckless young tough, carrying a soft hat in his hand.*)

GATES. (*Timidly.*) May I ask, sir, if—

REGAN. (*Interrupting impatiently.*) Aw, go t' hell!

GATES. Very good, sir. (*He goes out.*)

McCOY. (*Eagerly.*) Say, Mike—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Wait a second! What about Hurley's bar? Did ye smash it good?

McCOY. (*Impatiently.*) Yeah, we put it on the blink. But, Mike—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) An' Hurley? Wot about him?

McCOY. (*Again impatiently.*) It's all right. We laid him out just like ye wanted.

REGAN. (*Relieved.*) So *that's* O. K. Now tell me why yer not at St. Mary's Hall this minute, a-listenin' t' them guys like I told ye to?

McCOY. (*Embarrassed.*) Say, Mike, somethin''s doin'.

REGAN. (*Sternly.*) Well?

McCOY. An' I just thought I'd drop in an' tell ye 'bout it on my way to the meetin'.

REGAN. G'wan! Spit it out!

McCOY. My missus—

REGAN. Wot?

McCOY. (*With a sudden grin.*) It's a boy!

REGAN. (*Joyfully.*) Naw!

McCOY. (*Delighted.*) Sure! He weighs nine pounds! The cutest little duck ye ever seen in all yer life!

REGAN. An' yer good woman?

McCOY. Doin' fine. Everythin' goin on slick!

REGAN. Say, when did it—?

McCOY. 'Bout five o'clock, when I was out a-smashin' Hurley's bar—*you* know.

REGAN. Porky, shake! (*They do so violently and solemnly.*) We'll have a drop o' this t' celebrate.

(*Turns to the table and pours out some whiskey.*)

McCOY. The christenin' 's on Sunday week, an' she said I was t' tell ye ye'd got t' stand up with the kid an' leave us name him Michael R.

REGAN I'll be a proud man that day, Porky. (*Giving him a glass.*) Now let her go t' Michael Regan McCoy!

McCOY. Michael Regan *Ignatius* McCoy.

REGAN. Gawd help him, may he grow up to be as swell a scrapper an' as fine a friend as his old man was before him!

(*They both drink their liquor at a gulp.*)

McCOY. I thank ye kindly, Mike!

(*Pause. They both look at each other.*)

REGAN. Say, Porky, is it true what they say?

McCOY. What?

REGAN. (*With solemn curiosity.*) That kids ain't got no hair on 'em when they're born?

McCOY. (*In some heat.*) Whoever says that's a liar, an' I'll bust him in the mug! Mine's got a bunch o' hair! An' what's more—it curls!

REGAN. An' their eyes, now. Ain't they closed like kittens fer a week or two?

McCOY. A week or two nothin'! Why, he lay there a-blinkin' an' a-winkin' at me like we'd known each other all our lives!

REGAN. Ain't it queer now—ain't it queer how people come into the world!

McCOY. That's right.

REGAN. (*Wistfully.*) I don't s'pose—a man really knows wot life means 'nless he's got a kid.

(*The music in the next room stops.*)

McCOY. Sure thing. (*Enthusiastically.*) Say, Mike, we're just a-waitin' fer *yer* first one t' come t' make a bonfire of the whole blame Ward! We'll—

REGAN. (*Quickly.*) Quit it!

(*He rises.*)

McCOY. Wot's bitin' ye?

REGAN. (*Looking around towards door.*) Can't ye see? Me wife!

(*They rise, as the door opens and* EMILY *comes in, humming the air she has just been playing. She sees the two men and stops short. Then, with distant carelessness*):

EMILY. Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you were in your office. Is that you, Mr. McCoy? How d' you do?

McCOY. (*Bowing nervously.*) Fine, ma'am, I thank ye! The same t' you, ma'am. It's—it's getting cold this evenin', ain't it?

EMILY. Is it? Well, I won't disturb you. (*She turns to the door.*)

REGAN. (*Eagerly.*) No, don't go. I got somethin' I want t' give ye. (*Speaking aside out of the corner of his mouth.*) Beat it, Porky!

McCoy. Wot's bitin' you?

Regan. Fade away! Ain't ye got the manners to see when ye ain't wanted?

McCoy. (*Suddenly.*) Pardon me. Good evenin', ma'am. I hope ye sleep well, ma'am. See ye later, Mike.

(*Goes out very embarrassed.*)

Emily. (*As the door closes.*) Good night, Mr. McCoy.

Regan. (*Confidentially.*) He means well, Porky does. But ye see the poor feller ain't had no social advantages. But ye'd like Porky if ye kind o' got acquainted with him. Aw, I know he's a mut in a parlor but gee! he's an ace in a bar! (*Slight pause.*) Say, yer lookin' swell t'night! I kept pipin' ye at dinner an' sayin' t' myself, "Gee!" says I, "She's got all them other dames lashed t' the mast!"

Emily. I think I'll go upstairs, Michael. I'm feeling rather tired.

Regan. No, wait. D' you know what day this is?

Emily. Day?

Regan. Yeah. It's April 29th.

Emily. Well?

Regan. Well, think back six months.

Emily. (*Suddenly.*) I'd forgotten!

Regan. I had n't. So I took the liberty o'—

(*He takes the jeweler's box from his pocket.*)

Emily. (*Under her breath.*) Six months! Why, it seems six years!

Regan. It don't t' me. (*Timidly.*) Say, Emily!

Emily. (*Turning to him.*) What? (*Seeing the box.*) Oh, no—

Regan. Aw, g'wan! Take it! It's just a little keep-sake. (*He presses it into her hand.*) Just somethin' t' show I'm still on me job—"strivin' t' please"—like they say in the ads.

Emily. (*Trying to give it back to him.*) Take it back, Michael.

Regan. Wot?

Emily. Credit it wherever you got it and send the money to Father Kelly for his strikers' Home Fund.

Regan. Strikers?

Emily. The women and children—you understand—

Regan. (*Eagerly.*) But ye ain't even looked at it—say, it's a di'mond frog with—

Emily. (*Interrupting.*) Oh, take it!

(*Pause.*)

Regan. (*Taking it.*) I'm sorry. I did n't know ye minded when I gave ye things. Gee, if I'd only known I'd—

(*He stops short with an effort, turning towards the door.*)

Emily. That's all right. Good night.

Regan. Good night. I won't bother ye no more.

(*He slowly goes out.* Emily *stands for a moment, then turns quickly to other door just as it opens and* Gates *appears.*)

Gates. Madam.

Emily. Well, Gates?

Gates. There's a gentleman to see you.

Emily. Now? I'm not at home.

Gates. It's Mr. Griswold, madam.

Emily. Who?

Gates. Mr. Donald Griswold.

Emily. (*Faintly.*) Why—why—

Gates. And he said I was to tell you it's most important.

Emily. Then I think you'd better show him in.

Gates. Very good, madam.

(*He goes out. She crosses to the other door, opens it, listens. Then, satisfied, closes it and returns to the middle of the room as* Gates *shows in* Donald.)

Donald. (*Constrained.*) Hello, Emily.

Emily. (*To* Gates.) That'll do, Gates. Will you shut the door? (Gates *bows and does so. When they are alone* Emily *throws her arms about* Donald's *neck with a smothered cry.*) Don, my dear! Oh! Oh! I'm so glad you've come!

Donald. (*Rather stiffly.*) Are you? I thought—it might be the other way round, after all that's happened.

Emily. Don't be foolish, dear! I have n't seen you for so long! It's five months now! Oh, Don! Come along—sit down here and tell me about everything. How's dad?

Donald. Very well. His rheumatism came back in January, but nothing serious.

Emily. Did he have old Cortlandt?

Donald. Yes.

Emily. I wish he'd change. They say this new man, Winters, is awfully good.

Donald. Imagine father changing doctors after all these years!

Emily. Don!

Donald. Yes?

Emily. How's the business?

Donald. All right. Though don't you

think it's rather rough on dad and me to ask?

EMILY. Don, why wouldn't either of you answer my letters?

DONALD. (*Gravely.*) We both took your marriage pretty hard, you know.

EMILY. And I've been so proud! I wouldn't give in and try to make up—even though I wanted to so often! But now—my dear, I never realized before how much I love you!

DONALD. (*Uncomfortably.*) I'm chairman of that big strikers' mass-meeting to-night, and I've got to be at St. Mary's Hall by nine-thirty, so you see I haven't got much time. I—Emily, where's Regan?

EMILY. Oh, I don't know. In there, I think. Don, you're looking thin, and awfully tired! Can't you get off for a week and—

DONALD. (*Interrupting her.*) Excuse me, but I'm in an awful rush, and what I want to know is—

EMILY. (*Fiddling with his tie.*) Why, that's the very last tie I knitted for you! How well it's worn!

DONALD. (*Impatiently pulling away from her.*) Do listen, Emily! I want to know what side you take in this anti-Regan movement.

EMILY. What side?

DONALD. Yes. How do you feel about the strike, for instance?

EMILY. (*Vaguely.*) Strike?

DONALD. Yes, strike. The Union strike we're running against him. Where do you stand?

EMILY. I don't know.

DONALD. You don't know?

EMILY. I've never meddled in his business. I've just done all I could to help the wives and children of the men he employs and let it go at that. I've been cowardly about facing things, I know. But to-night—the Archibshop wrote me a note. He wouldn't dine here. He told me such dreadful things. They killed a saloon-keeper this afternoon.

DONALD. I know—Dave Hurley.

EMILY. (*Breaking down.*) Oh, Don, I've been having a terrible time! It just seems sometimes as if I couldn't keep it up a minute longer! Be good to me, dear—please—I need it—I need some one to be good to me!

(*She turns to him, sobbing like a child.*)

DONALD. (*Melting for the first time and petting her tenderly.*) Poor little girl! There now—don't cry! I'm right here! Your big brother's right here and he'll take care of you exactly the way he used to!

EMILY. (*Trying to control herself.*) I—I can't help it! It's just too—splendid to have you back—again—

DONALD. Is it? Then you'll try to help me, won't you?

EMILY. (*Drying her eyes.*) Help you?

DONALD. Yes. It's like this. We—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) Don, give me your hand.

DONALD. (*Doing so.*) They're getting Regan's men to strike and join the Union at the rate of a hundred a day. Unless something happens we'll make him shut down business by Monday at the latest. Why, even now the Western companies are getting scared—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) Does he know that?

DONALD. No, but he will. They say he can't stand up much longer and he won't! He can't! No matter how many dirty tricks he's carrying up his sleeve!

EMILY. Dirty tricks? (*Looking at him intently.*) What d'you mean?

DONALD. (*Confidentially.*) Why, Gleason—he's our attorney—Gleason thinks that Regan's just lying low until he can get a couple of thousand niggers up from Georgia or Alabama, and start 'em working at the docks at a quarter a white man's wage. He could do it, too. Damn him, he's the only man I know who could!

EMILY. Ssh! Don! Be careful! He'll hear you!

DONALD. (*Lowering his voice.*) But before I get after the railroads and head him off, I've got to be dead sure of the whole proposition, and that's why I've come to you.

EMILY. To me?

DONALD. (*Eagerly.*) Yes. What about it? Is that his little game?

EMILY. (*After a slight pause, withdrawing her hand.*) I don't know. I've told you I never interfere in his business.

DONALD. Well, I want you to do a little interfering now—for me. I want you to find out whether this is true, and I want you to find out what road he's going to bring 'em over. Then we'll wait and nab him in the act. I'm glad he's in. You can get it out of him to-night.

EMILY. Don, dear, it—

DONALD. (*Interrupting.*) I'll ring you up to-morrow about eleven and—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) Don, I could n't do that.

DONALD. (*Impatiently.*) Why, of course you could. Just tell him you 're interested! Get him talking, you know how —he 'll take care of the rest.

EMILY. I mean—I would n't do it.

DONALD. What?

EMILY. (*Uncomfortably.*) After all, he 's my husband.

DONALD. But you 're on our side! You 're one of us! I 'm your brother, when it comes to that.

EMILY. I—I could n't, dear. That 's all.

DONALD. You must! It 's your only chance to show dad and me you 're sorry for what you did—that you 're fond of us still!

EMILY. (*Rising.*) I won't, I tell you! I can't!

DONALD. (*Rising.*) You 'd better look out, Emily, or you 'll make me think you approve of everything that man is doing —killing saloon-keepers and all the rest!

EMILY. (*Indignantly turns on him.*) I don't approve of it! You know I don't! You know I hate it from the bottom of my soul!

DONALD. (*Instantly.*) Then why don't you help us stop it? You can. You hold the chance right there in your two hands! Good Lord, don't you realize the importance?

EMILY. Yes, of course I realize—but I just know it 's impossible.

DONALD. It is n't!

EMILY. (*Her temper rising.*) It is! And what 's more you have no right to come and ask me!

DONALD. (*Angrily.*) Oh, very well, then. One thing 's sure—I 'll never come again.

EMILY. If that 's the only sort of reason that brings you, I hope you never do!

DONALD. Emily!

EMILY. What do you mean by stirring up all this trouble anyway? Did n't my husband help you just about as generously as any man could? Did n't he pull you up and get you on your feet and give you half his business exactly as he said he would? He 's kept his word, Michael has. He promised he 'd leave you alone and he 's done it, too! And that, I believe, is more than *you* can say!

DONALD. (*Turning angrily.*) I never gave my word!

EMILY. You 're my brother, so I did n' see the need of asking for it. But no —oh, Don, you 've made me feel ashame of you! I 'm ashamed of my family fo the very first time!

DONALD. (*Amazed.*) Do you mean that

EMILY. Yes, I do.

DONALD. You 're sure?

EMILY. Quite sure.

DONALD. (*Between his teeth.*) Goo night, then.

EMILY. Good—

(*She stops short as the door opens an* REGAN *appears. A pause.*)

REGAN. (*To* DONALD.) Get out o' m house, ye dam', sneakin' little son-of-a gun, before I—

EMILY. (*Flaming.*) Stop that!

REGAN. (*Turning to her.*) Wot?

EMILY. He 's my brother, and he ca come when he pleases and go when h pleases, so long as I choose to let him.

REGAN. (*Sternly.*) See here, Emil I 've never got my back up befor t' night, but now you 're gettin' just little bit too gay! D 'ye know wot y are before yer anyone else—I don't ca if it 's sister or daughter or life-lo friend? Yer Mrs. Regan—got it? M R.! An' if ye think yer goin' t' sit o *my* parlor sofa, in the middle o' m house, an' tell the guy I 'm scrappin' a finish how t' land me on the jaw—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) I did n't say word! You can ask him if I did! (*A pealing to her brother.*) Don!

REGAN. Then I *did* ring the bell! Th *was* the reason why ye come in he t'night! Gee, fer a good boy, yer g ting on great—you are! First ye me help ye when yer down and o Then, by way o' thankin' me, ye sne around an' get me men t' strike. A now I find ye tryin' t' make me own w welch on me! This may be honest, Gr wold, but if it is—give me the ot thing!

DONALD. Don't worry, you 've got t already.

REGAN. Now beat it, ye rubber-so porch-climber ye! Beat it, an' if I e catch ye in my house again, ye won't out alive!

DONALD. (*Coolly.*) All right. Keep eye on St. Mary's Hall to-night, Reg if you want to know how things are ing. There 'll be a few live wires don't expect. (*Telephone rin*

EMILY. (*Impulsively.*) Don!

DONALD. No, I 'm through with you.

(*He goes out.* EMILY *stands by door with head bowed.* REGAN *has gone to answer telephone, leaning over desk with one knee on sofa.*)

REGAN. (*At the telephone.*) Hello. That you, Porky? Yeah. Yer at the Hall? Well? Have they got a full house? Speak up, there 's such a damn lot o' noise! What about the street outside? Jammed for blocks? Men, women, an'— (*He smothers a furious exclamation.*) Naw, go on. I did n't say nothin'. Has the Mayor come? I can't hear, they got a band playin', ain't they? Waitin' fer young Griswold? Yeah. He 's comin' in his auto. I wish 't was in his hearse. Wot?

(GATES *enters.*)

GATES. Is Mr. Regan there?

EMILY. He 's telephoning, Gates.

REGAN. (*Hanging up receiver and turning about angrily.*) Well, wot d' ye want? (*Irritably.*) Come on! I won't have no foolin' t'night!

GATES. A man from the Labor Union. He said you—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Bring him in. (GATES *turns to go.* REGAN *suddenly roars.*) Say, get a move on there, ye knock-kneed Britisher, or I 'll take the crease out the back o' yer neck with the toe o' my boot!

GATES. (*Outraged.*) Sir—I—

REGAN. Ye fat-headed second-girl! Beat it now an' bring him in!

(GATES *goes out quickly.*)

EMILY. (*Trembling.*) You must not talk to the servants that way while I 'm in the room! I can't stand it! I just can't!

(*A pause.*)

REGAN. (*Shamefacedly at last.*) Aw, say, I did n't mean all that. I 'm sorry.

(GATES *opens the door and shows in the Union delegate, a rather poorly-dressed, defiant-looking, slouchy laborer, wearing his Sunday clothes.*)

You from the Union?

SCANLAN. Yeah.

REGAN. Wot 's yer name?

SCANLAN. Scanlan.

REGAN. Sixth Division?

SCANLAN. Yeah.

REGAN. I 'm on. I fired ye one day when ye got too flip. Remember that?

EMILY. How d' you do, Mr. Scanlan?

SCANLAN. (*Startled.*) Why, ma'am, I— (*He pauses, embarrassed.*)

EMILY. I hope that Mrs. Scanlan is feeling better than when I saw her yesterday?

SCANLAN. Thanks, ma'am. The doc, he says she 's just about the same.

EMILY. (*Brightly.*) Well, we ought to be thankful she 's no worse! (*To* REGAN.) Excuse us, Michael, Mrs. Scanlan 's an old friend of mine, and she has bronchitis.

REGAN. Oh, is that so? (*To* SCANLAN, *uncomfortably.*) Well, come on! Wot d' ye want? Choke it up! I ain't got much time!

SCANLAN. (*Beginning his speech.*) At the meetin' o' the board last night we passed a resolution—

REGAN. (*Impatiently.*) Aw, damn yer resolution! Wot 's the least ye 'll take?

SCANLAN. (*Briefly.*) Ten hour day, two shifts, an' a general superintendent elected by the Union.

REGAN. (*Grimly.*) Anythin' more?

SCANLAN. Yeah. Our own saloon an' no one fired fer usin' 'em 'stead of yours.

REGAN. (*Between his teeth.*) Go on!

SCANLAN. Twenty-five per cent raise on wages, an' I guess that 's all.

REGAN. All? Say, don't ye want me watch an' chain?

SCANLAN. (*Doggedly.*) We don't want nothin', Mr. Regan, that ain't ours by rights.

REGAN. (*With sudden and ominous calm.*) Who framed up that resolution?

SCANLAN. Wot 's the diff, s' long as it was carried?

REGAN. Was it Griswold?

SCANLAN. (*Defiantly.*) I ain't a-sayin'.

REGAN. (*Softly.*) Griswold! I thought so!

SCANLAN. (*More defiantly.*) Well, wot 's the answer?

REGAN. Oh! Ye want me answer, do ye?

SCANLAN. (*Insolently.*) Yeah. An' if it ain't the kind we like, we 'll soak ye all the harder later on.

REGAN. (*Ominously still.*) Oh, ye 'll soak me all the harder later on!

SCANLAN. (*Openly bullying.*) Aw, gee! Ye make me sick! Come off that bum perch, Regan! We done ye, and ye know we done ye, an' there ain't a word more to be said!

REGAN. (*Suddenly springing on him like a wild animal.*) Ain't there?

(*He strikes the man with tremendous*

force, EMILY *shrieks, the man falls and lies quivering on the floor.* REGAN *draws back to kick him in the side.)*

EMILY. (*Coming between them, pale and very firm.*) Michael!

REGAN. (*Thickly.*) Wot 's that—?

EMILY. (*Looking at him firmly.*) Michael, it 's I. (*He looks at her as if seeing her for the first time. There is a pause. Her gaze subdues him. At last she speaks quietly.*) Get some whiskey.

(*She turns and kneels by the wounded man, examining him.*)

REGAN. (*Returning with the glass.*) Is he out?

EMILY. (*Pouring whiskey between his lips.*) He 's stunned, that 's all. (*Looking up at* REGAN.) It 's a fine thing to send a man back this way to his dying wife.

REGAN. Dyin'! But I thought ye said—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) It is n't bronchitis. It 's pneumonia, and it was brought on from cold and hunger. The doctor says she won't last out the week. She made him promise not to tell her husband until the end.

REGAN. Why?

EMILY. Because she did n't wish to stand between him and his striker's work. (REGAN *gives a muttered exclamation and sits on couch, his face in hands.*) That 's what you 're fighting, Michael, and you 'll never beat that spirit in a thousand years.

REGAN. Has she—got any kids?

EMILY. Four. The youngest boy was born last summer. (REGAN *has taken a roll of bills from his pocket hastily. He comes to where* SCANLAN *lies.*) What are you doing now?

REGAN. (*Bending over and slipping the money in* SCANLAN'S *pocket.*) Just a couple o' bills, that 's all. He 'll find 'em in the mornin'.

EMILY. (*Bitterly.*) You nearly kill him, and when he 's lying here, stunned and helpless, you think you can make up by putting money in his pocket! Oh, what 's the use?

REGAN. (*Instantly.*) Use? Why, ain't ye got no feelin's? Don't ye realize this man 's got a sick wife an' four kids—one of 'em a baby born last summer? Don't ye know he ain't had no wages since this strike was on? His wife needs medicine t' pull her through an' them growin' kids ought t' stoke up three times a day on meat an' pertaters? (*Door bell is heard.*) Say, wot 's the matter with ye anyway? Why—(*He interrupts himself suddenly and turns to listen. A pause. He goes over to the window and looks out.* SCANLAN *moves and groans aloud.* REGAN *turns quickly back.*) It 's His Grace!

EMILY. The Archbishop?

REGAN. Yeah! He 's comin' here to see me. We got t' get this guy out o' the way.

EMILY. (*Busy with* SCANLAN.) Wait: I think he 's coming to. (*To* SCANLAN.) Mr. Scanlan—(SCANLAN *makes another movement and tries to sit up. She helps him.*) There! You 're feeling better, are n't you? (SCANLAN *sees* REGAN *and guards himself.*) It 's all right—all right! Nobody 's going to hurt you, Mr. Scanlan! (*To* REGAN, *quickly.*) Help him up, Michael.

REGAN. (*Doing so.*) Where 'll I stick him?

EMILY. I don't know. In your office, I suppose. (REGAN *half drags, half carries him towards door.*) I hear Gates. Can you manage him alone?

REGAN. Sure.

EMILY. (*Whispering.*) Put him in the big chair.

REGAN. (*As he is dragging* SCANLAN *through the door.*) An' the Bish?

EMILY. I 'll talk to him.

(REGAN *and* SCANLAN *disappear. She closes the door after them and turns just as the other door opens and* GATES *appears.*)

GATES. (*Announcing.*) His Grace, the Archbishop.

(*There is an instant's pause, then the* ARCHBISHOP *enters. He is a big-jowled Irishman, of much the same physical type as* REGAN. *He is dressed in clerical frock coat.*)

EMILY. (*Coming forward cordially, her hand outstretched.*) Your Grace!

ARCHBISHOP. (*In his deep, rich voice, in which the traces of a former accent still cling.*) Mrs. Regan, this is indeed a great pleasure.

EMILY. Michael will be here directly. Won't you sit down? He 's just attending to a little business for a—a friend.

ARCHBISHOP. I hope ye did n't take offense at my refusin' t' come t' yer party t'night, but after what I 'd heard—

EMILY. I understand. Oh, I understand perfectly.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Very winningly.*) Mrs. Regan, can't ye do somethin' t' stop him?

EMILY. Please, your Grace—

ARCHBISHOP. He'll listen t' a good woman. I remember once his old mother tellin' me how she kept him off the streets for a week just by askin' him t' help her with the dishes after supper. An' he did it!

EMILY. (*Bitterly.*) For a week.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Smiling wisely.*) Well, she was only his mother.

EMILY. I'm only his wife.

ARCHBISHOP. I know. An' I thought when he came t' me that day an' said, "Father," says he, "I'm goin' t' get married!"—I thought our Lady from Heaven had dropped a smile right down into his heart. But now—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) Please! Please, not any more! (*Trying to control her voice.*) You don't know—

ARCHBISHOP. I know there's mighty little any man can do if his good woman's made up her mind the other way round. Ah, try it just once, me daughter, an' remember yer two souls will stand t' gether on the Judgment Day!

EMILY. (*Coldly.*) I feel that I have no right to interfere.

(*The door opens, and* REGAN *appears, a book in his hand.*)

REGAN. (*Pretending not to see the* ARCHBISHOP.) I've just been readin' the most interestin' book, me dear—(*Starting.*) Well, if there ain't his Grace! Gawd save yer Rev'rence, I did n't see ye at all!

(*He kisses the* ARCHBISHOP'S *ring devoutly.*)

EMILY. Good night, your Grace.

ARCHBISHOP. Oh, don't go, Mrs. Regan, there's nothing we have to say that you should n't hear.

EMILY. Very well. I'll be back directly.

(*She goes into next room.*)

ARCHBISHOP. (*Gravely.*) I'm on my way t' the meetin' at St. Mary's Hall.

REGAN. (*Interrupting quickly.*) Ye ain't a-goin' t' speak against me, Father?

ARCHBISHOP. That's just what I've got t' do.

REGAN. But why?

ARCHBISHOP. Young Griswold was talkin' t' me three hours this afternoon an' I find I've kept my mouth shut long enough.

REGAN. Well, if ye open up now, I see my finish.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Earnestly.*) My son, I hope t' God ye do!

REGAN. Aw, Father!

ARCHBISHOP. So I just stopped in on me way down—just for the sake o' old times, Mickey—to ask if ye won't give in before it's all too late.

REGAN. (*Between his teeth.*) Give in an' take a lickin'!

ARCHBISHOP. (*With a troubled smile.*) A lickin'! Ah, it's true you never were much good at that from the day yer family moved into Dugan's bar an' my old father—God rest his soul!—came over from the old country to run my uncle's grocery down the block! D' you remember?

REGAN. (*Laughing.*) Say, we used t' guy the life out o' ye back there. When ye first came over, every time ye opened that mouth o' yers, ye'd let out a begorra green enough to turn the Fourth of July into St. Patrick's day!

ARCHBISHOP. (*Amused.*) Sure, Mickey, an' it's true ye never would let me be! Only yesterday I was thinkin' o' the time ye got a corner in dead cats an' sold 'em for a dime apiece—a nickel the kitten—t' tie on the end o' strings an' slam us decent boys with when we came out from our Sunday school!

REGAN. Sure, I remember! Gee, I had a swell time that day, an' I made a dollar an' twenty cents, too!

ARCHBISHOP. Yes, ye always were the J. P. Morgan o' the whole Fourth Ward! But remember when ye'd go too far, I'd rise up in the name of righteousness an' beat the pants clean off yer legs!

REGAN. Well, ye was older 'n me an' a blame sight bigger, too!

ARCHBISHOP. An' then ye'd lay fer me in Clancy's alley, with a brick in one hand an' a piece o' lead-pipe in the other—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Waitin' fer hours at a stretch t' put ye t' sleep, like the good kind friend I was!

(ARCHBISHOP *looks at him, somewhat taken aback.*)

ARCHBISHOP (*Reflecting.*) Well, thank God fer one thing, Mickey. Ye never could aim straight when it came t' the plumbin'!

REGAN. 'Member our last scrap behind them packin' boxes on the night before

ye sailed away t' Rome? Gee, I can feel that knock-out ye gave me after twenty-five years!

ARCHBISHOP. (*Smiling.*) An' mighty little good it 's done ye, I 'm thinkin'! Ye know, Mickey, ye have n't changed much since those days.

REGAN. Nor you neither, Terry—(*Suddenly embarrassed.*) Savin' yer Reverence's pardon.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Laughing.*) Ah, Mickey, what a priest you 'd have made!

REGAN. An' you, yer Grace,—gee, what a politician!

ARCHBISHOP. (*Affectionately.*) Mickey!

REGAN. Yes, Father?

ARCHBISHOP. Give it up, my son! Get away from Clancy's alley!

(EMILY *enters.*)

Why, ye 've been livin' here all yer life an' ye need a change, so why don't you start in t'night an' square yerself with the whole town by handin' these men over what they want? (*Slight pause. Then putting his hand on* REGAN'S *arm.*) It 's fer you I 'm askin' it, Mickey. Just fer you.

REGAN. Well, an' if I don't?

ARCHBISHOP. Then I 'll go to this meetin' t'night an' tell these men that the Church o' God is right behind 'em, an' I 'll never let up till I 've struck ye t' the ground, my son, an' I can do it! Ye know I can! (*Pause.*)

REGAN. All right. Ye 've got me. I give in.

ARCHBISHOP. D 'ye mean it?

REGAN. Sure. There 's nothin' else t' do.

ARCHBISHOP. My son, I—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) If ye go straight home from here without showin' yourself or speakin' at the meetin', I 'll send 'em word t'morrer mornin' that I 'm down an' by Sunday we 'll have settled on the terms.

ARCHBISHOP. D' you promise?

REGAN. (*Brazenly.*) Sure I promise.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Doubtfully.*) Are ye sincere? Can I trust ye to play me square?

REGAN. Ye can trust me like ye 'd trust yerself. In fact, I 've sort o' grown t' feel that the Union 's right an' I 'm all wrong. An' feelin' that way I 'd like t' make up fer wot I done t' them poor fellows in the past.

ARCHBISHOP. (*Still doubtfully.*) How long have ye been feelin' this way, Mickey?

REGAN. Aw, I dunno. Two weeks—off an' on.

ARCHBISHOP. How about this afternoon?

REGAN. (*Innocently.*) This afternoon?

ARCHBISHOP. Yes.

REGAN. I dunno nothin' about this afternoon.

ARCHBISHOP. Ye mean ye have n't heard?

REGAN. I swear I ain't heard nothin' G'wan, wot is it?

ARCHBISHOP. (*Incredulous.*) About ye own gang, McCoy and all the res a-breakin' into Hurley's saloon an' club bin' the poor man until—

REGAN. (*Virtuously.*) Now ain't tha just too bad! I told the boys again an again they 'd better look out fer thei foolin' or it would get 'em into trou ble!

ARCHBISHOP. Foolin'!

REGAN. They 're young, ye know, an' the got t' work hard fer a livin'. So I neve feel like blamin' 'em too much when the try t' get a little enjoyment out o' life

ARCHBISHOP. Enjoyment!

REGAN. (*Shaking his head.*) But ev'r now an' then they go too far. I 've n ticed that. They sometimes go too fa Say, Father, they ain't killed Hurley have they?

ARCHBISHOP. We don't know yet. Bu Mickey— (*He hesitates.*

REGAN. Yeah, Father?

ARCHBISHOP. (*Significantly.*) Yer quit sure no orders came from you this after noon t' do this thing?

REGAN. I swear t' Gawd I never heard word about it up t' now! (*Pause. Th telephone on desk rings.*) That 's M Coy now. He 's at the meetin', tellin n how it 's goin'. (*Answering the call.* Hello, Porky. Yeah. (*Very severely.* Say, wot d' ye mean by never tellin' n 'bout this Hurley business? Ye ain had time? Well, you come up here aft the meetin' and I 'll have somethin' say t' ye—understand? The idea o' suc goin's on! Why, folks 'll think I pu ye up to it meself! Yeah! Don't apo ogize now! It don't do no good, an' makes me all the sorer! Now who been speakin' down there? Young Gri wold? How 's she goin'? Enthusias risin'? (*With a savage laugh.*) Is th so? Well, ain't that nice? Rumor what? The last speaker t' be the Arc bishop? G'wan, His Grace is standi right beside me now an' he says he ain goin' near the hall t'night!

(*He turns and looks up appealingly at the* ARCHBISHOP.)

ARCHBISHOP. God help me, I believe ye, Mickey, an' I'll give ye this one last chance.

REGAN. (*Turning triumphantly to the telephone.*) Yeah, ye can bet on it! It's O. K. Just take my word. So give 'em all my love, Porky, an' tell 'em I don't care what the hell they say!

(*He rings off with a grin.*)

ARCHBISHOP. In a week, then, everythin' will be settled fer good?

REGAN. (*His eyes gleaming.*) Just one week, an' I'll have settled 'em fer good an' all!

EMILY. (*Suddenly.*) D' you hear that?

ARCHBISHOP. Mrs. Regan! I—

EMILY. D' you know what he means?

REGAN. Stop that!

EMILY. (*Facing him.*) I won't! I won't stop until I've told His Grace that not one single word you've said is true!

ARCHBISHOP. What—?

REGAN. Say, yer crazy! Gee, my wife's gone off her nut!

EMILY. (*To the* ARCHBISHOP.) He's lied to you. He's taken you in from the very beginning. Why, he has n't the least intention of giving up one inch to those strikers!

REGAN. Don't listen to her, Father!

EMILY. He's just fighting for time. Time! That's all he wants! A week? Why, in a week he's going to have two thousand negroes sent up from Alabama to take the place of Union men!

REGAN. (*Forgetting himself.*) Who told ye that!

EMILY. Look at him! He has the truth written all over his face!

REGAN. (*Turning away with clenched hands.*) Gawd—

ARCHBISHOP. (*Sternly.*) Well? What have ye got t' say?

REGAN. (*Pulling himself together.*) My wife's—all off. She don't know me, that's all. I say I've had a change o' heart! I swear I feel as if every one o' them blame strikers was me brother!

EMILY. How dare you say that? Open that door, your Grace, and look into the next room. The man you'll see there brought the Union Ultimatum to this house to-night. He'll show you how my husband treats his brothers!

REGAN. Father! Just a second! Now listen to me please—

ARCHBISHOP. (*Pushing* REGAN *out of the way.*) Get out o' me way!

(*He goes across the room, opens the door, and disappears into* REGAN'S *office.* REGAN *drops his mask for a moment and has an animal spasm of rage, keeping perfectly silent the while.* EMILY *stands with her breast heaving. After a moment their looks meet. A pause. Then the* ARCHBISHOP *reappears, a stern, commanding figure.*)

REGAN. (*Attempting to detain him.*) Say, it was an accident! He fell down by himself! I never meant to hurt him! Why, he's one o' me very best friends! I would n't a-had this happen fer—aw, Father, wait now! Say, where are ye goin'?

ARCHBISHOP. (*In righteous heat.*) To St. Mary's Hall, t' talk to the citizens o' this town as a priest has never talked to 'em before! And when I'm through, Michael Regan, you'll stand naked an' tremblin' before the whole world, an' not one man will let ye touch his garment as he passes by!

REGAN. (*Seizing his arm and whining.*) Aw, wot's yer rush? I did n't mean t' get ye sore! Honest t' Gawd, I did n't! Aw, come, Father, yer not a-goin t' leave me this way! That ain't no way t' treat an old friend! Say, Father, I—

ARCHBISHOP. (*Interrupting.*) Let me by!

REGAN. (*Not budging.*) Sure I will, only I just want t' make ye understand how I feel about yer goin' down there an'—

ARCHBISHOP. Let me by, Michael Regan!

REGAN. (*Throwing aside his conciliatory manner.*) All right! When that meetin's finished, an' not one second before!

EMILY. Michael!

ARCHBISHOP. Do you think you can hold me here against my will?

REGAN. (*Recklessly.*) I don't think. I'm sure! An' if ye don't believe it, why off with yer coat, Terry Sullivan, and we'll see if all the Saints can save ye from a lickin'!

ARCHBISHOP. Down on your knees, Michael Regan! Fall down on yer knees an' pray fergiveness fer those blasphemies! Rebellious child, have ye forgotten that the armies of the Lord protect His servants? Have ye forgotten the great Church standin' like a mighty rock against the waves o' sin? D' ye think a wretched straw like you can break its power or change its end from what was

written in the Angel's Book, a million years ago?

REGAN. (*Muttering.*) Aw g'wan—I did n't mean nothin'—

ARCHBISHOP. D' you think a fool can stand alone and shake the deep foundations o' the world? Out o' my way, presumptuous man!

(REGAN, *cowed, steps back, and the* ARCHBISHOP *sweeps past him with real majesty and strength. As soon as the door shuts on him,* REGAN *turns fiercely and bitterly to* EMILY.)

REGAN. (*In an outburst.*) That 's a swell turn ye just done me, ain't it? Goin' back on yer husband, tryin' t' soak him ev'ry way ye could!

EMILY. Please, Michael—

REGAN. Say, ain't I treated ye well? Ain't I done ev'rythin' I thought ye wanted? Ain't I given up half me business t' yer old man? Ain't I put ye in a swell house an' deposited a cool million to yer credit in the First National?

EMILY. Don't, Michael!

REGAN. Ain't I kept out o' yer way as much as I could—a-sneakin' in the back door, beatin' it to my room whenever I heard ye comin'?

EMILY. Michael—

REGAN. I 've tried t' make livin' here easy fer ye, and wot do I get in return? Ye wait till I 'm scrappin' with both hands an' breathin' hard, an' then ye up and stick a knife in me back, ye—

EMILY. (*Interrupting wildly.*) I did n't!

REGAN. Wot 's that?

EMILY. I just spoke out because I could n't help it! I could n't see you do a thing like that!

REGAN. Aw, it 's too bad about you!

EMILY. But now 's your chance to make it up! Michael, listen! *It 's your chance!*

REGAN. Chance! With him on his way down there t' talk against me? I ain't got no chance! All I got is a finish!

EMILY. Don't let him do it for you! Give in of your own accord, before anyone can make you!

REGAN. Give in?

EMILY. Yes, call up the mass meeting! Tell them you 've heard their ultimatum! Tell them you accept it! Then when the Archbishop comes, he 'll find out what you 've done, and oh! he 'll be so glad!

REGAN. I won't quit while I got the life still in me!

EMILY. You must! Oh, Michael, I don't want you to do this just to help those men or to please the Archbishop or to make me happy! I want you to do it for yourself!

REGAN. Naw!

EMILY. Don't you see what it means? Don't you understand? You 're the only one I 'm thinking of! It 's all for you! Everything 's for you!

REGAN. Naw!

EMILY. Michael! You must!

REGAN. I said I won't!

EMILY. (*Desperately.*) Please!

(*She puts her hand on his arm.*)

REGAN. (*Throwing her off.*) Give in! Accept their ultimatum? Let them scoopers know they got me licked? Say, wot d' ye think I am?

(*Telephone rings.*)

EMILY. (*Hopelessly.*) Oh! I don't know! I don't know!

REGAN. (*At telephone.*) Hello? Who is it? Porky? Wot? He 's speakin'? In the name o' the Holy Catholic Church! Wot? Never t' work fer me again! Wot 's all that noise? Cheerin'? (*Suddenly he dashes the instrument to the desk without ringing off and glares at* EMILY.) Well, ye 've done the trick, d' ye hear? Ye done the trick! Now go on! Tell me yer glad! Spit it out! Get it off your chest, an' laugh! Say, why don't ye laugh? I 'm just waitin' fer that laugh! Ye think I 'm smashed! Ye think I 'm finished! Ye think I 'm knocked t' hell! Well, I ain't! D' ye hear? I ain't! I 'll beat 'em yet! By Gawd, I 'll beat 'em yet!

(*His fist crashes on the desk as the curtain falls.*)

ACT THIRD.

SCENE. *The scene is the same as in Act Second, the next morning about nine o'clock. The room is in slight disorder; the desk is covered with newspapers, memoranda, and clippings. Newspapers with glaring headlines are tumbled all about the floor. Chairs have been moved from their regular positions.* REGAN *is sitting behind the desk, thus half facing the audience. He still wears his dress trousers, silk socks and pumps, with a jersey. He is chewing the end of an unlighted cigar—a pile of ashes and butts lies near the whiskey tray, near at*

hand. He is pale and unshaven. As the curtain rises he is running through the morning papers, one after the other. DAVIS, *his secretary, is seated at the other end of the table, his stenographic books before him, awaiting* REGAN'S *next orders.*

REGAN. (*Muttering as he glances at the headlines.*) "Boss Regan falls at last—Repudiated by grain companies—Long fight ends in complete defeat—" (*Throws it aside.*) Gimme the *Tribune.*

DAVIS. Here it is, sir.

REGAN. (*Reading.*) "Mass-meeting at St. Mary's—Interference o' Archbishop—" (*Looking up.*) Gee, *they* got me in the oven, too! How 's the *Courier?*

DAVIS. Antagonistic, I 'm afraid.

REGAN. G' wan, let 's have it! (*Reading.*) "Regan's finish—City 's free at last—" (GATES *enters, carrying a breakfast tray with coffee and toast.* REGAN *shakes his head at him in disgusted disapproval.*) Say, you get out o' here! I won't have no dumb-waiter in here this mornin'.

GATES. Mrs. Regan told me to bring you some coffee, sir. She heard you 'd been down-town all night and had no breakfast when you came in.

REGAN. (*Almost to himself.*) Well, wot d' you think o' that?

GATES. (*Doubtfully.*) I beg pardon, sir, I—

REGAN. (*Irritably.*) Say, wot 's bitin' ye? Can't ye stick it down? Yeah—here on the table! D' ye think I 'm goin' t' feed standin' up—like a mule? (GATES *comes around to the desk beside* REGAN *and puts down the tray.*) Got any eggs?

GATES. No, sir, I— (*Starting to go.*)

REGAN. Well, move along and lay a couple—quick! (GATES *looks bewildered.*) Two fried eggs! Grasp it?

GATES. Very well, sir. (*He goes out.*)

REGAN. Read the *Leader* editorial.

DAVIS. Yes, sir.

REGAN. There it is.

(*He kicks it toward* DAVIS, *then half sits down on end of desk.*)

DAVIS. (*Picking it up and reading it rapidly.*) "We take off our hats to the men who have raised the present issue against Mr. Regan's methods." (*He hesitates.*)

REGAN. Well? Got a cramp?

DAVIS. (*Resuming hastily.*) "We congratulate our citizens upon their enthusiastic support of the strike which has just ended. Thanks to Mr. Donald Griswold and his union, 'Shindy Mike' no longer holds this city in his grip. The merciless crook who"—er—is there any use going on, Mr. Regan?

REGAN. (*Calmly.*) Say, that 's libel, ain't it? I 'll sue Waterman for fifty thousand. File it. The little ink-slingin' mice—I 'll show 'em! (*The butler enters.*) Say, can't I sit here two minutes without yer makin' me a present o' your mug?

GATES. More wires, sir, sent up from the office by special messenger.

REGAN. (*Sitting down.*) Read 'em, Davis, quick!

DAVIS. (*Reading them.*) United Transport—Chicago Freight—Erie Navigation—

REGAN. That all?

DAVIS. Yes, sir.

REGAN. (*Sinking back disappointed.*) Well, wot have they got to say? All gone back on me? That it? Speak up, can't ye?

DAVIS. (*Reading the telegrams.*) Yes, they 've all cancelled their contracts. They 're all negotiating a return to Griswold.

REGAN. I knew they would! Take a wire.

DAVIS. (*Sitting at the end of the table and taking up his stenographic notebook.*) Yes, sir?

REGAN. (*Walking up and down.*) Freight—Navigation—Transport—all the same messages—(*Dictating.*) Fail t' understand yer attitude. My position in this town never better. Will have situation controlled within a week. Urge no action until you see my representative—

DAVIS. (*Timidly.*) But, Mr. Regan—?

REGAN. Well, choke it up!

DAVIS. (*Desperately.*) They can read in any paper in the country that the strike 's broken—that we 're beaten—

REGAN. (*Interrupting savagely.*) Aw, dry up! (*Noticing the butler, who has all the time been standing at the door.*) Say, come out that trance an' tell us wot yer waitin' fer?

GATES. I beg pardon, sir, there 're nine more gentlemen from the papers waiting to see you and—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Tell 'em t' go t' hell!

GATES. (*With dignity.*) I have, sir, several times.

REGAN. (*Amused.*) Well, see they get there, understand?

GATES. Yes, sir, but—

REGAN. (*Suddenly.*) Now you get a move on before I catch ye on the nut with— (*He seizes the whiskey bottle with a threatening gesture, half real, half mocking.* GATES *goes out quickly. The telephone rings on the desk.* REGAN *answers it.*) Hello? Porky? Where are ye? Down in the Ward? Yeah. G'wan—who? Young Griswold? Wot 's he doin' down there? Speakin' t' my own men? Tryin' t' make 'em join the Union? I—wot 's that? (*Exploding.*) Yeah, choke him off, sure, stop him! But say, Porky, none o' that Hurley business now! No, take care o' him. Don't hurt him, just hustle him out quick, see? (*He rings off and turns to* DAVIS.) Griswold down on Lake Street, right in the middle o' the Ward, tryin' t' show my own gang how to bust me! The damn fool, he don't know wot he 's doin'. As sure as me name 's Regan, that guy don't know wot he 's doin'!

(*He rises furiously.*)

DAVIS. (*Alarmed.*) Mr. Regan, don't go on so. Remember, you 've been up all night!

REGAN. (*Controlling himself with an effort.*) An' I got a long, hard day ahead. Yer right, me son. Now sit down an' we 'll get t' work. I 'll tell ye wot I 'm goin' to' do. I 'm—

(*The door opens, and* EMILY *appears, very fresh and charming, carrying a covered plate.*)

EMILY. (*Brightly.*) Good morning.

DAVIS and REGAN. Good morning.

(DAVIS *goes out.*)

EMILY. I 'm sorry I did n't think of the eggs, Michael. Here they are.

REGAN. (*Who has taken off his hat on seeing her.*) Thank ye kindly. (*Gulping.*) I always think it 's a good idea t' begin the day with a couple o' fried eggs!

EMILY. Are they all right?

REGAN. (*Looking at them.*) Yeah, they look slick—(*Glancing shyly at her.*) I mean—I mean they look real nice!

EMILY. I 'm glad.

REGAN. (*Still shy.*) Say, Em'ly—

EMILY. Yes?

REGAN. (*Looking away.*) Thank ye for rememberin' all this. It was just wot I needed. An'—an' ye was awful kind t' think o' me.

EMILY. (*Embarrased.*) Why, that 's all right, Michael. (*Assuming authority.*) Go on! Sit down now! Everything 'll get cold if you wait!

REGAN. (*Timidly.*) Ye don't feel like a fried egg yerself, do ye?

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) Thank you, I had breakfast upstairs. But I 'll pour you coffee, if you like.

REGAN. (*Eagerly.*) I wish ye would.

EMILY. (*Sitting at the desk.*) How many lumps do you take?

REGAN. Four. (EMILY *laughs.*) I like things awful sweet.

EMILY. (*Smiling.*) That 's not very grown-up, is it?

REGAN. (*Looking at her.*) Perhaps I 'm not as grown-up as ye think. (*Slight pause.*) Gee, but this seems natural!

EMILY. (*Busy.*) What seems natural?

REGAN. (*Slowly.*) Aw, I dunno. Just t' have you sittin' in the sunshine, pourin' out me coffee. That 's all.

EMILY. (*Looking up innocently.*) Why, I never did it before to-day.

REGAN. I know, but it seems natural all the same.

(*Their eyes meet. There is a pause.*

EMILY. (*Rising in an embarrassed way.*) Well, there you are! Now drink it right away while it 's hot.

REGAN. (*Coming around below desk and sitting down.*) Say, it smells fine!

(*He eats and drinks. She watches him anxiously.*)

EMILY. (*At last.*) Gates said you were down at your office all night. Could n't you manage to take a nap?

REGAN. Naw. I 'm afraid I ain't got no time fer sleepin'.

EMILY. That 's too bad.

REGAN. Is it? Well, I guess there 's nothin' t' do about it. (*He drinks.*

EMILY. (*Suddenly.*) Oh, before I forget it! Everybody who accepted for dinner to-morrow night has sent in a—a more or less polite lie. They won't come, Michael.

REGAN. (*Eating his eggs.*) Well, I guess I can stand that. Gee, I 'd rather beat up three heavyweights any day than talk polite t' one o' yer lady friends!

EMILY. (*Almost to herself.*) Even Lucy Darrow and the Gilmores! I did n't think it of them somehow. (*Remembering where she is.*) So if you want to you can make another engagement. That 's all. I just thought I 'd tell you.

(*She goes to door*

REGAN. (*With a short savage laugh.*) Another engagement? You talk like I was an English dook at Newport! Why, do you know there ain't ten people in this town 'd let me eat out their ash-cans—free o' charge?

EMILY. (*With a sudden impulse of pity.*) Michael, I want to—

REGAN. Well?

EMILY. I want you to know I 'm sorry. That 's all.

REGAN. (*With amused cunning.*) Sorry fer wot? Me? Well, don't you lose no sleep about it! Just lie back an' watch me—see?

EMILY. Watch you?

REGAN. Yeah. It 's goin' t' be a slick show!

EMILY. What do you mean?

REGAN. D' ye think them slobs have got me down? Ha! I 'm just puttin' up a little con game now, but the minute they let go me arms and say, "This trip he 's done fer!" why, then 's the time I 'll up and nail 'em t' the wall!

EMILY. I don't understand!

REGAN. (*Mysteriously.*) Well, sit tight and ye will. (*Drinks coffee.*)

EMILY. (*Faltering.*) Is n't it all over? Are n't you—beaten?

REGAN. (*Amused.*) Beat? *Me?* Say, d 'you know what I 'm going t' do?

EMILY. No.

REGAN. Then I don't mind tellin' ye. Ever been to Montreal?

EMILY. No.

REGAN. Well, I have. It 's a slick place —Montreal. Good climate, theatres, swell people, an' all that. How 'd ye like t' live there, Em'ly?

EMILY. (*Startled.*) *Live* there?

REGAN. Yeah. 'Cause yer goin' to, young woman. If ye hang on t' me, that 's where yer headed fer!

EMILY. (*Staring at him.*) What d' you mean, Michael?

REGAN. (*Emphatically.*) I 'm goin' t' turn the ocean grain traffic from this town t' Montreal.

EMILY. What?

REGAN. (*Quickly.*) I said I 'd get back at 'em good an' hard, and that 's how I 'm goin' t' do it.

EMILY. (*Stammering.*) But—but, Michael—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) I sent the Western a wire last night, offerin' 'em half rates if they 'd unload at Montreal. As soon as I got time t' build me own elevators, that is. An' here 's their answer—(*Picking it from the desk.*) Come in half an hour ago.

(*Tosses it to* EMILY.)

EMILY. (*Sitting on couch, reading.*) "Accept offer. Have notified our Eastern agents. Please expect shipments at Montreal by 15th."

REGAN. (*In triumph.*) I got 'em goin', Em'ly, I got 'em goin'! I knew they 'd take me up when they heard the rates I 'm offerin'! There was n't nothin' else to do. An' I made them Montreal contractors a proposition they don't dare to throw down! I 'm waitin' for their answer now. (*Looking at clock on desk.*)

EMILY. Those Canadian officials are awfully down on American business. I remember once when Dad tried to start a branch at—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Aw, they got their price! Damn 'em, ye can bet on that! An' I guess I 'm big enough to stand it, too!

EMILY. You mean?

REGAN. (*Brazenly.*) Sure. I 'd tip 'em like I would a bunch o' bell-hops!

EMILY. I see. But is n't that—risky?

REGAN. (*Carelessly.*) Naw. If they get found out, they 're done. If *I* get found out, I done right—see?

EMILY. And you think it will pay?

REGAN. (*Exploding.*) Pay? Who wants to make it pay? I don't! All I want is to get back at this town an' that 's wot I 'm goin' t' do!

(*The door left opens and* GATES *appears.*)

GATES. Another telegram, sir.

REGAN. (*Eagerly.*) Give it here! (*He seizes and opens and reads it. Then, with an outburst of triumph.*) It 's O. K.! D' ye hear? They take me up! The job 's done! The whole job 's done!

EMILY. Is it from Montreal?

REGAN. (*Handing it to her.*) Yeah. Oh, gee, but this is swell!

GATES. Any answer, sir? I told the boy to wait.

REGAN. Naw. Yeah, give him this! (*Tossing* GATES *a silver dollar.* GATES *stumbles and drops the coin.*) Aw, go back t' cricket! Go back t' cricket! Tell him to keep the change. He 's brought me the best news I ever had!

(GATES *has picked up coin and goes out.*)

EMILY. (*Crumpling up telegram.*) Now, Michael, listen!

REGAN. Yeah?
EMILY. There 's one thing I want to make perfectly clear.
REGAN. (*Lighting a cigar.*) Wot 's that?
EMILY. If you go to Montreal, you go alone.
REGAN. Oh, I do, do I?
EMILY. Yes, I won't live anywhere else but here.
REGAN. Ye 'll find it sort o' lonesome work, I guess.
EMILY. Lonesome?
REGAN. Yeah. When I quit, d' ye know wot this town 'll be?
EMILY. What?
REGAN. A line o' shanties, two saloons, an' a dead dawg in the middle of the street.
EMILY. You 're very foolish, Michael.
REGAN. All right, you wait an' see. I tell you I 'm goin' to strip this place till it 'll have to crawl into a barrel! I won't leave it so much as a toothbrush and a pair o' shoestrings to its name!
EMILY. I don't believe it.
REGAN. All right. But just the same, ye 'd better stick it on my tombstone. One o' them big marble crosses with a couple o' first class angels at the bottom, an' underneath—all in them fancy letters—"Gawd help Mike Regan. He turned the wheat t' Montreal."
EMILY. I don't believe a word you 're saying.
REGAN. (*Looking up a number in the telephone book.*) All right, then. Don't!
EMILY. Michael.
REGAN. Wot? (*Running his finger down the page.*) People's Gas—Home—Institute—Line—Magazine—Market—
EMILY. Michael, have you absolutely made up your mind about this?
REGAN. Yeah. (*Reading.*) Printing—Theatre—Trust— (*Stopping.*) 2800 Main.

(*He takes up telephone receiver*)

EMILY. Then I suppose you 'll be going up to Montreal immediately.
REGAN. (*To operator.*) 2800 Main. (*To her.*) As soon as I 've cleaned up things down here. (*To the operator.*) 2800 Main. 2800 I said.
EMILY. Cleaned up things?
REGAN. Yeah. Got hold me cash.
EMILY. What *do* you mean?
REGAN. Why, ye don't think I 'll go off an' leave any loose change floatin' round, do ye?
EMILY. I don't understand.
REGAN. (*To operator, suddenly.*) Fe Gawd's sake, get a move on! 280 Main! (*To* EMILY.) Why, I got ove ten millions invested in this place Nearly eleven, when ye come down to it An' when I skip, me dough skips wit me—see?
EMILY. No, I *don't* see. I don't see a all!
REGAN. (*At telephone.*) Hello! People' Trust? Yeah. Connect me with Mi Fairbanks. Well, I know he 's th president, that 's why I want to tal to him. My name 's Regan. Yea Michael R. Got it? (*Pause. He puf at his cigar.* EMILY *watches him.*) Hello, that you, Fairbanks? Oh, I 'm feelin' fine! Them strikers? Well, ain't finished with 'em yet, an' that why I called ye up. Yeah, that 's w I mean. I want ye t' call in all th mortgages. Sure! Foreclosure. I don care where they are! Them guys ain paid no interest on 'em fer the last— well, *I* did n't start the strike, did I 'T was n't *my* fault! (*Angrily.*) don't give a damn *wot* happens to 'em They ain't paid me my interest an' I jus foreclose—see? Yeah, I 'm callin' in a my loans. Sure! Every security I g —all over the town! Wot? Oh, I jus feel like it, that 's all. Say, you g ahead an' do just like I say! Hul Naw, cut that. I—say, Fairbank that 'll do for you, understand?

(*He rings off suddenly, then turns find* EMILY *close beside him.*)

EMILY. Michael!
REGAN. Gee, I thought ye 'd gone!
EMILY. Michael, I want to know wh mortgages those are.
REGAN. Aw, just little ones, down roun Lake Street.
EMILY. Lake Street!
REGAN. Yeah. That end o' town.
EMILY. Lake Street! Why, that 's t Fourth Ward!
REGAN. (*Carelessly.*) Sure. O' cours So it is!
EMILY. You 've bought up mortgages the Fourth Ward?
REGAN. Looks that way.
EMILY. And now you 're going to fo close?
REGAN. Yeah. Why not?
EMILY. What 's going to happen to th men?
REGAN. Wot men?
EMILY. The men who live down the

The men you've employed for years.

REGAN. Ye mean the men that raised this strike an' beat me? They're goin' t' lose their happy homes. That's wot's goin' happen to *them!* Ye go down there next week an' ye'll find every sidewalk in the Ward piled up with bedquilts an' bureaus an' rockin' chairs an' gas stoves.

EMILY. (*Involuntarily.*) Oh, no!

REGAN. (*Continuing.*) Yeah, an' ye'll run across yer friend Mrs. Moriarity, sittin' on the corner o' Lake an' River sellin' matches in the rain. An' Scanlan, ye remember Scanlan? Well, he'll be sweepin' streets. If he's lucky, that is—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) No!

REGAN. An' the only grub the Baxter kids'll get will be them little minnies ye fish fer off the docks, an' old lady Hogan'll have t' climb out o' bed an' sling a sack over her shoulder an' start in alley-lickin'!

EMILY. (*Shrilly.*) Stop it! Michael!

REGAN. (*Triumphantly.*) An' all the time *I'll* be leanin' back up there in Montreal, smokin' me cigar an' takin' it all in!

(*He tilts back chair, stretches, and puts his feet on desk.*)

EMILY. But, Michael, those families have suffered enough already. The strike nearly finished them! They have nothing left!

REGAN. Ah, I thought I'd wake ye up. (*Intensely.*) Well, it serves 'em right!

EMILY. And they're the very people that made you! They've given you everything you have—every tiny little thing!

REGAN. Wot of it?

EMILY. Don't you see? You can't turn on them this way.

REGAN. Can't I? Say, watch me!

EMILY. Jump on them from behind like some wild animal they've had to punish—

REGAN. Aw, dry up on that!

EMILY. Get even, get back at them, just to satisfy your own miserable little idea of revenge!

REGAN. (*Bursting out.*) Revenge! That's it! I got 'em all like that! (*Holding out one hand with slowly closing fingers.*) I'm goin' t' squeeze 'em till I hear their bones a-crackin'!

EMILY. No, you can't! It's too cruel! Too hideously cruel!

REGAN. Aw, forget it!

EMILY. I married you to keep these people from being ruined. I gave up a great deal when I did that, Michael, and now I'm not going to see my sacrifice—(REGAN *turns quickly*) that's what it was!—I won't see my sacrifice turned into an absolutely useless thing.

REGAN. Well, how are ye goin' to help it?

EMILY. (*Hysterically.*) I don't know. I don't know anything except that I'm your wife. And so you can't do this. I'm your wife—do you understand?—your wife—

REGAN. (*Turns in an outburst.*) You lie! Yer not my wife an' ye know it! My wife! (*He laughs.*) That's a good one, that is! I guess if ye was my wife I might be feelin' different. I guess I'd have no right t' start a big thing that me missus was so strong against. But you! Ye've built a wall round yerself t' keep me out, an' gee! it done the job! Why, I seen ye crack a smile at the butler there an' talk t' him almost like he was human! But me! Say, have ye ever done any more than that t' me? No, by Gawd, ye let me live here in the same house with ye day after day, ye let me lie alone there in my bed night after night, thinkin' o' the locked door between us an' sufferin' through the black hours like I didn't know a man could suffer, wishin' the day would break an' find me dead—

EMILY. (*Trembling.*) Michael!

REGAN. (*Close to her.*) Ye say ye feel sorry fer them strikers. Well, lemme tell ye right here, there's not one of 'em that ain't got more 'n me! I don't care if he's cold an' his stummick's empty an' the window's busted an' the roof's leakin'! *He's got someone t' love him,* so I guess he'll see it through! But me—! Why, ye kept it all back from me, all wot I want most in the world, me feelin's, me rights—why, the best things Gawd ever gave us men! Wot have ye done with 'em, woman? An' say now, where do ye get the nerve to call yerself my wife?

EMILY. Michael, you have no right to talk to me like this. You may have forgotten the agreement we made before I married you, but I haven't. I've lived up to every word of it. I've done every single thing I said I would. (*He starts to speak.*) No, wait! There's something else. I've been perfectly right,

but I—I did n't realize you felt like this. I did n't dream you—but, Michael, so long as you do, I 'm willing now to go on. I 'm willing to go ahead. I 'm willing to make another bargain.

REGAN. (*Quickly.*) Wot 's that?

EMILY. (*With difficulty.*) I 'll change. I 'll be different.

REGAN. Be different—? (*Suddenly and fiercely.*) Say, quit that or some day I 'll—

EMILY. (*Interrupting.*) Why—don't you *want* me to be different?

REGAN. (*Looking at her with almost a sob.*) You know—*oh gee, you know!*

EMILY. All right, then. I will—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Huh?

EMILY. (*Finishing quickly.*) If you give up this dreadful idea of yours! If you stay here and take your beating like a man!

REGAN. (*Panting.*) D' ye mean—say, ye don't mean if—

EMILY. Yes, I do.

REGAN. Naw! Ye can't. (*Gulping.*) Beat it now! I give ye warnin'! Beat it while ye got the chanst!

(*He covers his face with his hands.*)

EMILY. (*Proudly.*) I won't.

REGAN. Don't—

EMILY. Well?

REGAN. (*Agonized.*) Oh, my Gawd!

EMILY. (*With her last vestige of strength.*) Tell me—

REGAN. (*Rushing at her with a cry.*) Em'ly! (*Gathering her to him.*) I 'd go t' hell fer this an' lay there, Em'ly, an' lay a-smilin' there forever an' forever! Stop shakin'! Hold yer head up, sweetie! (*Loudly and triumphantly.*) I love ye! I love ye!

(*For the first time he kisses her.*)

EMILY. (*Trying to tear herself away.*) Stop it! Keep away!

REGAN. (*Triumphantly.*) Ye love me! Gee, ye love me an' I never knew!

EMILY. I don't! I hate you!

REGAN. (*Intoxicated.*) Yer givin' in 'cause ye *want* to—

EMILY. (*With a cry of horror.*) Stop it! *Stop it, I tell you!*

REGAN. (*Through his teeth.*) Yer doin' it of yer own free will!

EMILY. (*Furiously breaking away.*) How dare you say that!

REGAN. Well, ain't it true?

EMILY. (*Violently.*) No! No! I tell you I 'm selling myself for a price! A price!

REGAN. Em'ly!

EMILY. I 'm paying you just as if it were money! I 'm paying you cash down—because it 's the only thing you 'll take!

REGAN. Em'ly, fer the love o' Gawd!

EMILY. (*Beside herself.*) I want you to know—I 've got to make you understand! It 's just another bargain! You 're getting me cheap—d' you hear that?—cheap! I 'm going dirt cheap—

REGAN. (*Strongly.*) Stop it! (*He covers her mouth with his hand.*) I done some rotten things in me time, an' I guess ye know it, too, but gee! I never done nothin' half so rotten as wot yer doin' now!

EMILY. (*Hysterically.*) Oh—! Oh—!

REGAN. (*Scornfully.*) Sellin' yourself! Payin' me cash down! Goin' cheap! (*In a sort of rage.*) Gawd, d' ye think I want ye, if that 's how ye come? D' ye think I 'll take my wife that way? I guess ye don't know much about real men! If ye did, ye 'd never try t' put off such a deal. Ye 'd never a' made me feel ashamed o' ye—yeah, *ashamed*!—like I 'm feelin' now—

EMILY. (*Laughing and crying.*) Ashamed—? You—?

REGAN. (*Fiercely.*) I tell ye my kids are goin' t' be born 'cause I loved their mother with all me body an' mind an' soul, an' 'cause she loved me back with all o' hers! An' if such things as that can't be, why then, so help me Gawd, I 'll have no kids at all!

McCOY. (*Bursting in from right.*) Mike! (*He stands leaning against the wall.*) 'Scuse me—(REGAN *releases* EMILY, *who goes out the other door quickly.*) Say, Mike!

REGAN. (*Turning.*) Gee, Porky, ye look all in! Wot 's the game?

McCOY. (*Panting.*) It 's—young Griswold!

REGAN. Who? Come over here an' tell me.

McCOY. (*Half falling on the sofa.*) Gimme a drink—I run—all the way from —Lake Street—

REGAN. Sit down. (*At the desk, pouring whiskey.*) Well—g' wan.

McCOY. He come down t' the ward spiel—you know. He got up on a box an' a-wavin' one o' them nobby hats o' his, an' he just sailed into ye. Mike, sayin' how he got ye licked, rollin' all the dirty names he could think of. An' I sorter went off me nut an' see

as I happened to have a brick in me hand, I guess I just heaved it—an' it caught him in the head—an'—an' he went down.

REGAN. (*Glancing round.*) You—(*He goes to the door by which* EMILY *left and closes it. Then, in a low voice, turning round.*) Is he dead? (*Pause.*) Is he dead? (*Taking* MCCOY *by lapels of coat and pulling him around fiercely.*) G' wan an' tell me! Tell me! Ye got to tell me!

MCCOY. (*Not looking at him.*) I dunno. They took him into Dugan's café an' then the ambulance came and got him.

(*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*In an outburst, throwing* MCCOY *against the back of sofa.*) Damn ye, Porky! Damn ye—damn ye—

MCCOY. (*Terrified.*) Say, Mike, I did n't mean to do it—honest t' God, I did n't! All I wanted was t' knock his lid off! Aw, wot did he come down fer anyways? He might a-knowed he 'd get soaked in yer own ward—

REGAN. An' I 'd a-given me right arm t' have kept him safe!

MCCOY. I know ye would. But there 's no use talkin' now—(*Clinging to him.*) Wot 'll I do? Mike, I got a sick wife an' a new kid! Tell me wot 'll I do?

REGAN. Shut up, Porky, or the whole house 'll hear ye! Now listen! Did any one see ye fire that brick?

PORKY. Naw. They was all lookin' at him. I was on the outside.

REGAN. Yer sure nobody piped ye?

PORKY. Sure. Why, I 'm one o' the guys that carried him into the café!

REGAN. Then it 's all right. Go home t' the wife and kid, an' keep yer mouth shut, understand?

MCCOY. Not do nothin'?

REGAN. Not a damn thing. An' if there 's any trouble, I 'll look after ye.

MCCOY. Aw, thank ye, Mike—(*Grasps* REGAN'S *hand.*) I knew ye 'd fix it up fer me!

REGAN. G'wan now! Beat it! Remember me t' the missus. An' how 's the kid t'day?

MCCOY. (*Eagerly.*) Gettin' bigger. An' gee! his wrinkles is all comin' off!

(*Enter* DAVIS.)

DAVIS. Mr. Regan.

REGAN. (*To* DAVIS.) Wait a second.

MCCOY. You 're sure that 's all O. K.?

REGAN. I said so once.

MCCOY. Thank ye, Mike. S' long.

(*He goes out.*)

REGAN. (*To* DAVIS, *who is at window.*) Well, wot d' *you* want?

(*The low murmur of an approaching crowd is heard in the distance.*)

DAVIS. (*Turning.*) Mr. Regan, d' you hear anything?

REGAN. (*After listening a moment.*) Yeah. Wot is it?

DAVIS. Sounds like a crowd. I think they 're coming up Concord Avenue.

REGAN. (*Looking out window.*) The hell they are!

DAVIS. And there 's a gentleman says he *must* see you.

REGAN. I won't see no one.

DAVIS. Here he is.

(*Enter* DUNCAN, *full of excitement.*)

DUNCAN. Regan!

REGAN. (*Over his shoulder.*) Well, what d' you want?

DUNCAN. Donald Griswold went down to speak in the Fourth Ward and was set on by some of your toughs. He 's hurt —nobody knows how badly. He may be dead. (*The sound outside increases.*)

REGAN. An' that out there?

DUNCAN. The whole town 's up in arms. They 're sure you did it.

REGAN. (*Turns sharply.*) Me?

DUNCAN. Or had it done. They 're sure you gave the orders.

REGAN. O' course they are.

DUNCAN. Regan, I came to tell you the police are on their way. Mr. Griswold 's had a warrant sworn out. You 're going to be arrested.

REGAN. Damnation!

DUNCAN. Come on, the alley 's clear, but it won't be in five minutes. I have a motor waiting on the corner of McDonald Street. We 'll have you ten miles away by the time that patrol gets here.

REGAN. Say, who are you anyway?

DUNCAN. My name 's Duncan.

REGAN. Yer one o' his friends, then?

DUNCAN. Whose?

REGAN. Griswold's.

DUNCAN. What of it? I 'm here to help you now. Don't you believe it?

REGAN. Aw, wot yer givin' me?

DUNCAN. It 's true!

REGAN. Help *Regan?*

DUNCAN. No, damn you, not Regan! Emily Griswold's husband!

REGAN. (*Quickly.*) Cut it now!

DUNCAN. She's your wife, Regan! You've got to think about her!

REGAN. That's all right! I can manage my wife without no buttin' in from anybody—understand?

DUNCAN. You can't! That mob'll be here in a minute and this house won't be safe. I'm going to bring my motor to the side door. Tell her to come down this minute. I'm going to take her home.

(*He goes out quickly. The sound outside has become an angry roar. It is getting nearer.*)

DAVIS. (*At window.*) Why, they don't look like strikers!

REGAN. (*Looking out window.*) Strikers? Ye blame fool, it's the town!

DAVIS. The town?

REGAN. The whole damn town! (*Half to himself.*) Gee, here's where we're up against it!

DAVIS. (*More and more excited.*) Why! They're a lot of well dressed men! They haven't any hats! They look—why, they must be drunk!

REGAN. Aw, g'wan! They're about as drunk as a bunch o' tigers! (*The roar increases.*) Hear that? They're mad—mad clean through!

DAVIS. Look at them! The street's full! Why, there must be hundreds!

REGAN. Thousands is more like it.

DAVIS. But—but what are they doing up here? Mr. Regan, what are they after?

REGAN. (*Grimly.*) Can't ye see? Why, they come t' make a little friendly call on me, that's all.

DAVIS. (*Frightened.*) Oh, no, sir, not that! It—it must be a fire!

REGAN. Fire be damned! If ye ever heard a mob a-coughin' that way before, ye'd never ask again wot it means!

(*The roar becomes louder, confused and angry, as the mob is supposed to climb the fence and trample up the lawn.*)

DAVIS. You don't—?

REGAN. Sure I do. Why, every man-jack down there's out fer blood! Somethin' happened in the ward, an' they're comin' straight fer me.

DAVIS. (*Looking out again.*) Mr. Regan! Look! That's Scanlan on the sidewalk—the man with the brown coat! I'd know him anywhere! And there—d' you see? right beside him?—why, it's old Archibald Houghton, the vice-president of the First National—

REGAN. Houghton! (*Laughing.*) Ha! Ha!

DAVIS. And the fellow climbing the fence—is n't that Grayson? The senior member of Grayson, Grayson and Company?

REGAN. Yeah. An' that feller behind him, that's young Harry Huntington! See? The guy with the cigarette.

DAVIS. (*Looking in a new direction.*) They're a lot of strikers, too! And look there! See those Italians by the gate? Why, they're all mixed up! gentlemen and toughs, scoopers and big business men!

(*There is a great outburst under the very windows.*)

REGAN. (*Jovially.*) But they all take hold of hands when it comes t' hatin' me!

DAVIS. (*Drawing back.*) Look out, sir, they're right below there! They'll see you—(*Crash of glass.*) Good Lord!

REGAN. Go upstairs an' tell me wife to come down. Mr. Duncan's here to get her.

DAVIS. Yes, sir.

(*He goes out. Outside the door are heard the servants in terrified confusion.*)

GATES. (*Running in.*) Mr. Regan! Mr. Regan! There's a crowd of very dangerous-looking fellows outside!

(*He is followed by two terrified* MAIDS. *They all stand huddled near the door, very much frightened. Another crash from outside.*)

THE CROWD. (*Individual voices.*) That's right! Fire another! Gimme that brick! Come out o' there! He don't dare! The damn coward! Smash his winders!

REGAN. (*At telephone.*) Choke it off! I can't hear!

THE MAIDS. Mr. Regan! Mr. Regan!

REGAN. Choke it off! (*Telephoning.*) Hello. Gimme P'lice Headquarters. Yeah. (*Pause, during which another storm of yells and calls is heard outside.*) This headquarters? I'm Regan. Yeah, Michael R. Say, I got a mob outside here a-smashin' me winders. Can ye hear 'em? Naw? (*He holds the transmitter toward the window. Another crash of glass outside and yell.*) Not now? Well, take me word fer it an' send up Kelly with the reserves! send up all ye got—see? I'll need 'em, every one! S' long!

THE CROWD. Break into the side! Keep it up! Pull the house down! Aim

higher—ye missed it that trip! There! I got her!

(*Another crash followed by a general yell.*)

THE FRENCH MAID. *J'ai peur! J'ai terriblement peur! C'est des assassins—oui, des assassins!*

(*A brick crashes through one of the windows, falling to the floor amid a shower of broken glass. There is a general commotion.* REGAN *goes to the window.*)

THE CROWD. (*Outside.*) He's in there! Try the next one! Soak him! That's right! Let her go!

(*Another brick crashes in.* REGAN *runs to the desk and opens one of the drawers.*)

FRENCH MAIDS. *Oh, Mon Dieu! C'est des apaches! Quelle horreur!*

THE OTHER MAID. Mr. Gates! Oh, sir! What'll we do?

GATES. Be calm, young women, be calm!

(*He gathers them together and pushes them towards the door.*)

THE CROWD. Regan! Where is he? We want Regan! Regan! (*Another stone crashes in. A table is overturned and lamp broken. All the servants shriek and rush out.*) The sneak! The coward! Come out where we can see you! Regan! Regan! We want Regan!

REGAN. (*Taking his automatic revolver from desk-drawer.*) Ye would, would ye? Ye dirty dawgs, a-tryin' t' frighten the women! Ye wait there! *I'll* show ye! (*He runs to the window, opens it, and stands there. At his appearance a chorus of yells goes up and more missiles are hurled.*) Well, here I am! I'm the man ye want! Take a good look at me! I'm right here an' I ain't goin' t' move!

THE CROWD. (*Howling.*) We'll show ye! We got ye! Look at him! Kill him! Kill him!

REGAN. That's right! Yell away! Yellin' don't hurt nobody, so keep it up! G'wan! I like t' hear ye! But if ye bust so much as one more pane o' glass, by Gawd, I'll empty this repeater without stoppin' once to wink!

(*He covers them with his weapon. There is a dead pause, then a chorus of angry moans and jeers.*)

THE CROWD. Ah! 'T ain't loaded! He don't dare! It's one o' his tricks! *I'll* show him! Where's that brick!

REGAN. Say there, ye big slob with the red bandana—yes, you! Drop that brick or ye—wot? All right, I—(*He lifts his pistol and aims quickly. Then, laughing triumphantly.*) Aw, I knew I'd get ye! What's the answer? Yer scared! The whole damn crowd o' ye are scared! Ye know I'm here with nothin' but me wife an' a bunch o' second-girls, but I've got ye goin', yer hangin' over the ropes—

(*The roar of the enraged crowd surges up again.*)

THE CROWD. (*Enraged.*) We are, hey? We'll show ye! Stop his gaff! Bust in the door! We ain't scared! He can't kid us! G'wan, that's right! Don't quit!

REGAN. (*Raising his pistol.*) Say, stop right there—d'ye hear? The first guy that puts his mat on them steps 'll get a bullet through his nut—understand? Now come on! Say, why don't ye come on an' get me? I'm right here, all ready, just a-waitin' fer ye!

ONE VOICE. (*Then all.*) Lynch him! Get a rope, boys, an' lynch him! *Lynch him.*

(*The gong and hoofs of a police patrol are heard in the distance, gradually growing nearer.*)

REGAN. What's that? I did n't catch on t'—oh, all right! Fine an' dandy! If ye want t' lynch me, mister, come right up an' start in! That's it! Aw, don't be bashful! Come along!

(*During the end of this speech the mob raises a sullen roar.*)

THE CROWD. Don't let him kid us! Get in the bunch! We'll stop his drip! He can't do nothin'! (*The patrol is now close by.*) Cheese it! The cops!

(*The door behind* REGAN *opens and* EMILY *appears. She stands calmly at the top of the stairs, putting on her gloves. She is dressed for the street.*)

POLICE VOICES. Whoa! Whoa! (*Clanging of gong and hoofs very loud, then cease.*) Stand back there! Stand back! Move on! Get out o' here! Get off that fence! Go on home now! Shove 'em back! Kelly! Move on or I'll cave your head in! No back talk. Move on an' keep movin'. Yes, you! Move on! Move on!

THE CROWD. All right! All right! Wot's yer hurry! Say, wait a minute!

Let go me arm! All right, I'm goin', ain't I?

REGAN. (*Howling derisively, laughing, taunting, as police shove back the mob.*) That's it! Give it to 'em, boys! Beat 'em up, Kelley! Club their nuts off! Soak 'em! Kill 'em! (*Bursting into a roar of triumphant laughter, he closes the window and draws the portières together, turns, and for the first time sees his wife.*) Oh, that's you!

EMILY. (*Calmly.*) Where's Mr. Duncan? Mr. Davis said he was here.

REGAN. Is that all Davis told ye?

EMILY. Yes.

REGAN. (*To himself.*) Oh, my Gawd!

EMILY. Is Mr. Duncan downstairs? Mr. Davis *said* the library.

REGAN. He's out gettin' the auto through the crowd. He's come t' take ye home.

EMILY. (*Joyfully.*) Home? Is Don here, too? I mean—my brother?

REGAN. Naw, I'm afraid—I'm afraid he ain't here.

EMILY. Well, I'll go downstairs and wait. (*She starts to go.*)

REGAN. No, stay here. (*She stops.*) There's somethin' I got t' tell ye.

EMILY. What is it? Well, why don't you tell me? (*Pause.*) Michael, d' you know you're making me—rather nervous?

REGAN. Sit down.

EMILY. (*Obeying.*) Go on. (*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*Beginning in a business-like way.*) Yer brother—

EMILY. (*Quickly.*) Well?

REGAN. (*Continuing.*) Well, he went down t' the Fourth Ward about ten o'clock this mornin' t' talk t' all the men who'd stuck by me an' had n't joined the Union.

EMILY. Yes. Go on.

REGAN. Porky McCoy 'phoned me he was doin' it an' I got mad an' said t' head him off. Then you came in and we got t' talkin' an' I fergot all about him. An' you ducked out an' the mob collected down there an' I felt sure somethin' had gone wrong—

EMILY. (*Suspecting.*) Michael!

REGAN. But I did n't know a thing—s' elp me Gawd if I did!—until Porky came an' told me all about it.

EMILY. (*Breathing heavily.*) About what?

REGAN. Yer brother. (*Pause.*)

EMILY. (*Finally.*) Tell me—tell me quick! What's happened to him?

REGAN. Well, he was sayin' some rotten stuff about me an' that made the fellers sore an' they began firin' things. Porky says it was a brick that caught him on the head. They got him t' the hospital as quick as they could—

EMILY. (*Screaming.*) Oh—!

REGAN. (*Breaking out and rushing to her.*) Em'ly, ye don't believe I done it? Ye don't believe I done a thing like that? No, ye don't, ye can't—

EMILY. (*Covering her face with her hands.*) Don!

REGAN. I never knew a thing about it till Porky told me! Ye know that, don't ye, Emily? Ye know I would n't a-had it happen fer anythin' in the world! I—

EMILY. (*Rocking to and fro.*) Don! Don!

REGAN. (*Breaking down.*) Em'ly ye gotter believe me! I'm on the level this trip! I am! I swear t' Gawd I am!

EMILY. (*Not seeing him.*) Oh, Don!

REGAN. I got the whole town lined up against me. I'm all alone, but if ye believe me, Em'ly, I don't care! An' I'll be good from now on. I'll be as good as I know how. I'll throw up Montreal. I won't foreclose no mortgages. I'll do anythin' ye want if ye only believe me now! Oh, yer goin' to! Ye do! I knew ye would! I knew!

(*He throws himself on his knees before her and bursts into tears, his face buried in her lap, like a little boy.*)

EMILY. (*For the first time realizing his presence.*) Don't touch me.

(*She pushes him away with a gesture of horror and rises.*)

REGAN. Em'ly!

EMILY. Don't come near me!

REGAN. (*Seizing her hand.*) Wot d' ye mean?

EMILY. Stop it! Keep away!

REGAN. (*Fiercely.*) So *you* think I done it, too? Tell me! G' wan! I say ye gotter tell me!

EMILY. I don't think! *I know!* (*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*With a wild Irish yell.*) A-aah! (*Throwing her hand away.*) If you believe I done a thing like that, all right! We'll call it off! Go ahead! Wot are ye waitin' fer? Clear out o' my house! Beat it! Move along! (*She rushes out.*) Em'ly! Em'ly! I did n't mean that! I swear t' Gawd I did n't know nothin' about it! Don't go! Don't

leave me, Em'ly! I ain't got no one else! I 'm all alone—

(*Enter three plainclothes police officers by the other door. They are followed by two in uniform.*)

INSPECTOR. I 'm sorry, sir, but you 've got t' come along with us. There 's a cab waitin' an'—

(REGAN *turns, looks at the officers a moment, then slowly puts on his overcoat and hat, pours and drinks a glass of whiskey, lights a cigar, takes a handful from the humidor, puts them in his pocket, picks up a newspaper, puts it under his arm, and goes nonchalantly towards the door.*)

REGAN. (*Casually.*) Come on, boys.

(*He goes up the steps and out, followed by the officers, as the curtain falls.*)

ACT FOURTH.

REGAN'S *rooms in the Police Station, three days later. It is a plain room, with a bed, a bureau at right. At back a large barred window through which the city can be seen. Near window, a big deal table covered with papers, an electric lamp, a big box of cigars, a whiskey bottle and glasses. Near the door is a waiter's stand, holding a tray covered with napkin.*

REGAN *is sitting on the window ledge, smoking, and dictating to* DAVIS. *He wears a sack-suit and looks very tired. He is evidently keeping up with difficulty. His fighting spirit is broken.*

REGAN. (*Dictating.*) "I hope my change o' plans will not put you or your officers t' any inconvenience." Got that?

DAVIS. "Any inconvenience." Yes, sir.

REGAN. (*Continuing.*) "Shiftin' the grain traffic from this town t' Montreal would have been just the sort of a job I most enjoy puttin' through, an' I intended t' go into it fer all I was worth. But circumstances over which I have no control make it impossible fer me t' do so. Wishin' yer business all success an' so forth"—just finish her up, Davis. You know how.

DAVIS. (*Writing.*) So that 's the end of Montreal. (*Pause.*)

REGAN. Davis.

DAVIS. (*Finishing and looking up.*) Yes, sir?

REGAN. There 's somethin' I want t' talk t' ye about. I won't be needin' a secretary much longer.

DAVIS. Please, sir! Don't let 's go into that now.

REGAN. Why not? We got to, sooner or later. I was sort o' goin' t' suggest that you take an int'rest in the business.

DAVIS. The business?

REGAN. Yeah. *My* business. You 've been with me eight years an' ye know it backwards an' I could hand it right over t' ye t'morrer. P'raps you could run it better 'n I did—I dunno. But, gee! I bet no one on God's green earth could make it pay so well!

DAVIS. Mr. Regan.

REGAN. Yeah?

DAVIS. Don't feel so discouraged. It 's going to be all right. You 're going to get out of here within a week and—

REGAN. A week? (*He laughs.*) I wonder!

DAVIS. Mr. Regan, you must n't give up like this. It 's not like you, sir, if you don't mind my saying so.

REGAN. That 's right. I dunno myself these days!

DAVIS. Brace up, sir! Pull yourself together! Look on the bright side of it!

REGAN. Aw, wot 's the good? (*Sitting on bed.*) Hodges was here this mornin'.

DAVIS. (*Eagerly.*) Hodges? What did he say?

REGAN. He says if Griswold dies, I 'll be indicted for murder in the first degree.

DAVIS. Mr. Hodges missed his job. Lawyer—? He ought to have been a wet nurse! Why, Mr. Regan, there 's more nerve in one of your back teeth than in two hundred Hodges!

REGAN. He says the District Attorney 's working night an' day fer a conviction. They 're goin' over me record with a fine tooth comb. They 're gettin' evidence from *ev'rywhere*.

DAVIS. Evidence? Let 'em get it! They can't prove you slung that brick and they can't prove you *had* it slung.

REGAN. He says there 's only one way t' clear meself. We got t' find the guy who done it an' make him swear he was n't carryin' out my orders.

DAVIS. You never gave any orders!

REGAN. I know. But I got t' prove I did n't.

DAVIS. Well, does Hodges think that man

is going to walk in here and say, "Please, mister, I slung that brick and now, if it is n't too much trouble, won't you kindly electrocute me?" Is that what he 's waiting for?

REGAN. Aw, gee, I don't know wot t' do!

DAVIS. Whoever he is, I bet by now he 's half way to Nevada. No, Mr. Regan, if you get out of here, it 'll be without *his* help—

REGAN. *If* I get out!

DAVIS. And you 're going to! D' you hear that, Mr. Regan, you 're *going* to!

REGAN. All right, me son, all right. (*Looking at watch.*) Half past four. Wot time are ye goin' t' call fer Mrs. Regan t' bring her down?

DAVIS. Quarter to five, sir.

REGAN. Ye 'd better be hustlin', then.

DAVIS. (*Getting overcoat.*) Don't worry, sir. I 'll be there. (*Pause.*)

REGAN. Say, Davis.

DAVIS. Yes, sir?

REGAN. (*Not looking at him.*) D' ye happen to remember wot she said last night when ye gave her me message?

DAVIS. Why, she—seemed surprised.

REGAN. (*Eagerly.*) Yeah? And then?

DAVIS. She asked why you had to see her. I said just what you told me to say, that it was important business connected with the Fourth Ward mortgages. She seemed doubtful for a moment and then said she 'd come. That 's all.

REGAN. An' ye asked after her brother? Ye did n't ferget that?

DAVIS. No. She said his condition had n't changed—that it would n't till after the operation.

REGAN. An' Jameson was goin' t' operate t'morrer. (*A knock at door.*) Come in. (*The door opens and an officer enters.*) Well?

OFFICER. Porky McCoy 's downstairs. He wants to see you.

REGAN. (*Eagerly.*) McCoy? Send him along.

OFFICER. All right, sir. (*He goes out.*)

REGAN. (*Turning joyfully to* DAVIS.) It 's Porky, d' ye hear? He 's stuck by me! I knew he would n't welch like all the rest!

DAVIS. I 'll start along, then. (*Looking at a package of papers.*) Oh, Mr. Regan, what d' you want done with these?

REGAN. Wot are they?

DAVIS. All the Montreal contracts and estimates.

REGAN. Just leave 'em on the table. I 'll look after 'em.

DAVIS. Very well, sir. I—

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

REGAN. (*Opening it.*) Come on in, Porky! (*As he enters,* REGAN *pulls him in by the hand.*) Gee, man, but I 'm glad t' see ye!

MCCOY. Hello, Mike.

REGAN. How 's the wife an'—(*Looking at him.*) Say, wot 's the matter?

MCCOY. Nothin'.

(*They stare at one another.*)

DAVIS. (*At the door.*) Good-night, sir.

(*He waits a moment for* REGAN *to answer, then goes out quietly.*)

REGAN. Have a cigar?

MCCOY. Naw.

REGAN. A drink?

MCCOY. Naw, thanks.

REGAN. Say, Porky. Ye ain't sore at me, are ye?

MCCOY. Sore at you? Oh, Mike—

(*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*Standing looking at him.*) Porky, ye got somethin' on yer mind. Now go ahead an' lay it out to me, son.

(*Pause.*)

MCCOY. (*Blurting it out.*) Mike, I never knew they 'd think ye did fer Griswold! Gee, ye could a-knocked me over with a feather when I heard they 'd pulled ye in!

REGAN. I know that, me son, I know that.

MCCOY. I did n't mean t' play ye dirty, Mike—honest, I did n't! I did n't mean t' go back on ye! I would n't do that fer anythin' in the world!

REGAN. O' course ye would n't, Porky!

MCCOY. But I been readin' the papers, an' hearin' folks talk, an' seein' wot a good case they 've made out against ye, Mike, an' when Larry Dugan come in an' showed me wot that damn District Attorney had in this evenin's *Post*, I—I went into the kitchen where my wife was nursin' the kid, an' I begun bawlin'—an', gee, in about three minutes I 'd told her the whole thing!

REGAN. Ye told her?

MCCOY. Yeah, an' when I 'd finished, she said ye 'd been a good friend to me, Mike, an' it was up t' me. An'—an' she brought my overcoat—an' here I am, Mike, an' I guess that 's all.

REGAN. (*Tenderly patting him on shoulder.*) Ye poor feller.

MCCOY. (*In agony.*) Aw, don't! Smash me! Kick me! Beat me t' pieces! I

won't say nothin'. But don't be good t' me, Mike! I can't stand it—I can't—I can't—

(*He breaks down and cries, his head on the table.*)

REGAN. (*Putting his hand on his shoulder.*) Say, Porky! (*Standing over him.*) D' ye remember one night in my old bar on Lake Street? Gee, it's fifteen years ago now! An' ye took my side when Kelley's gang came in t' murder me fer holdin' back his nomination? All the rest had gone back on me, it was us two against eight. But we got behind the bar, an' ye grabbed the bung-starter, an' I broke four bottles o' Canadian rye over Kelley's head before I laid him out. Gee, that was a swell scrap! An' then, when it was all over, ye remember my comin' up t' ye where ye was leanin' over the big round table and a-wipin' the blood off yer chin, an' sayin', "McCoy," I says—fer I did n't know ye as well then, Porky, as I do now—"McCoy," says I, "ye've done me a good turn t'night, an' p'raps sometime I 'll have a chance t' pay ye back. But anyway," I says, "from this time on, so help me Gawd, there won't nothin' come between us two. They don't make nothin' thin enough fer that!"

MCCOY. (*Looking up.*) Mike!

REGAN. (*Very tenderly.*) Well, that chance I talked about—it's been fifteen years a-comin', Porky, but I got it now. An' I guess I 'll hang right on.

MCCOY. Wot d' ye mean?

REGAN. (*Clapping his shoulders.*) Go home an' tell the missus an' the kid it's all right! Mike Regan says it's all right!

MCCOY. But, Mike, I done it!

REGAN. Ye did not, Porky. The man that done it skipped an' we can't find him—see?

MCCOY. (*Not understanding.*) Mike, I ain't skipped! I'm right here! I'm willin' t' pay up!

REGAN. (*Smiling.*) Aw, come off! Ye don't know nothin' about it! Nothin'—nothin' at all!

MCCOY. Mike! I'm on! Yer tryin' t' let me off!

REGAN. Gee, Porky, but yer wise t'day.

MCCOY. But say, d' ye know wot 'll happen t' *you?*

REGAN. Now don't ye bother yer nut about me. I 'll get out o' here.

MCCOY. Ye won't! If Griswold croaks, this town 'll finish ye fer good, understand? It won't lie back until it's buried ye in quick-lime—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Gee, perhaps ye think I care! P'raps ye think I got a lot t' live fer! Well, if ye do, yer off! Way off! Miles off!

MCCOY. But yer wife—

REGAN. (*Turning away abruptly.*) Me wife? I ain't got one.

MCCOY. But yer kids? The family that 's comin' t' ye—

REGAN. Fam'ly? (*He laughs aloud.*)

MCCOY. But yer business? *That 's* there! Ye got *that* all right!

REGAN. (*Bursting out.*) Quit it! I'm sick o' the business! I hate it! I wish t' Gawd I 'd never seen it! Damn the business, that 's wot I say! Damn it! Damn it!

MCCOY. (*Frightened.*) I did n't mean nothin'.

REGAN. (*Controlling himself.*) That 's all right, Porky. I 'm sort o' done up t'day. But now ye see how I ain't got nothin' to live fer. An' remember, you got everythin'—everythin' a man can have! So go home now an' tell the wife. She 'll be a-waitin' an' a-worryin' an' ye ought t' let her know.

MCCOY. But, Mike, I—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Wotever ye did, Porky, ye did it as my man. Ye did it fer me, understand! An' as head o' the firm, I guess I stand responsible fer me employee! (*With a change of manner, taking out his pocket-book.*) Say, Porky, wot day did you say the christenin' was?

MCCOY. Christenin'?

REGAN. Yeah. (*Smiling.*) Michael Regan Ignatius McCoy.

MCCOY. It 's Sunday week, but—

REGAN. (*Taking out a bill and putting it in* MCCOY'S *hand.*) Well, you take this an' get the boy a present. One o' them silver mugs is the reg'lar thing. An' if there 's anythin' left over, just set up drinks fer the crowd, will ye?

MCCOY. No, Mike, I—

REGAN. (*Pressing the bill into his hand.*) Aw, rats! G' wan an' take it! An' tell the good woman I 'm—I 'm awful sorry I can't be at the church meself that day to hold the kid. Ye know I was—kind o' lookin' forward t' that somehow, but—

(*He hesitates, embarrassed.*)

MCCOY. (*Bursting out.*) Mike, I won't let ye do this! I did fer Griswold! It

was my fault an' now it 's up t' me t'—

REGAN. Aw, shut yer face!

McCOY. I won't! I 'm goin' straight downstairs an' tell 'em how it happened—

REGAN. (*Roaring.*) You dry up or I 'll bust yer jaw! (*Slight pause.*) Ye 'll tell 'em downstairs? Ye 'll tell 'em nothin'! D' ye hear? Ye 'll walk out of this place without openin' yer mug wide enough t' spit, an' ye 'll do it 'cause I tell ye to, by Gawd! there ain't no bigger reason! (*Knock at door.*) Come in. (*The door opens and the officer appears.*) Wot d' ye want?

THE OFFICER. There 's a lady to see you, sir. (*There is a slight pause.*)

REGAN. (*Suspiciously.*) 'T ain't another one o' them female reporters?

THE OFFICER. No, sir, it 's yer wife. She 's down in the Inspector's office.

REGAN. All right. I 'm ready. Ask her to come up.

OFFICER. All right, sir.

(*The officer goes out.*)

McCOY. S' long.

REGAN. S' long, Porky.

McCOY. Would ye mind—shakin' hands?

REGAN. Why should I mind, me son?

(*He does so.*)

McCOY. Gee, yer the best I—I ever met!

REGAN. Aw g' wan!

(PORKY *goes out quickly.* REGAN, *left alone, looks about, then quickly and awkwardly begins tidying up the room, fixing the napkin to cover the tray. He makes the desk a little more orderly, throwing cigar ends and ashes in waste basket. He picks up the cuspidor and drops it behind the washstand. He pours water in the basin, washes his hands, wipes them on the towel, throws the towel behind the washstand, sets the pitcher back in the bowl in the water. While brushing his coat, he sees his pajamas and throws them under the pillow, thumps the pillow, and is covering the red blanket with the counterpane when* EMILY *softly opens the door and pauses, watching him. He does not see her.*)

EMILY. (*At last.*) Michael.

REGAN. (*Starting suddenly and turning.*) Is that you? I did n't hear ye.

EMILY. (*Entering.*) They said to go right in.

REGAN. (*Very embarrassed.*) Sure. O' course. (*Pause.*) Won't ye—sit down?

(*He offers her a chair.*)

EMILY. Thank you.

(*She sits. There is another awkward pause.*)

REGAN. I—hope yer feelin' well?

EMILY. Oh, I 'm well enough—but—rather tired, that 's all.

REGAN. (*Sympathetically.*) I know.

(*Pause.*

REGAN and EMILY. (*Simultaneously.*) Yer lookin'— You look—

(*They both stop.*

REGAN. (*Politely.*) I beg yer pardon. After you!

EMILY. (*Glancing about uneasily.*) You look—fairly comfortable here. Some how I did n't expect to find things as— as comfortable.

REGAN. (*Embarrassed, looking about too.*) Yeah, they been real good t' me—the boys have. Davis comes here ev'ry day an' I got a telephone in the hall, an' they send in me grub from that hotel across the street. No, it ain't so bad—when— when ye get used to it. (*Pause.*

EMILY. (*Nervously.*) Mr. Davis said you wanted to see me about those Fourth Ward mortgages.

REGAN. Yeah. I want to make an assignment. I want to deed 'em over t' you if ye don't mind.

EMILY. Deed them over to me? How do you mean?

REGAN. Put 'em in yer name. Let you work 'em the way you want, give 'em to ye—understand?

EMILY. But—I thought you were going to foreclose?

REGAN. I changed me mind.

EMILY. Why?

REGAN. (*Not looking at her, speaking with difficulty.*) I dunno. (*At window.*) When yer up against it—the way I am now—ye sort o' feel like squarin' ev'rythin' up. An' I thought seein' ye was so int'rested in them folks down there, ye 'd like t' have an eye on 'em yerself an' keep 'em out o' trouble. They 're just like kids, ye know. They need lookin' after. (*A pause.*

EMILY. (*Softly.*) Oh, Michael!

REGAN. (*Glancing up at her.*) Will you do it, then?

EMILY. Yes, I 'll do it—if you want me to.

REGAN. (*Very business-like.*) All right. I had Hodges frame up an acceptance of the assignment. (*Taking it from envelope.*) Will ye look at it? It 's very short, ye see, but it covers the ground

(*She looks at him, but when he holds out the paper she takes it and bends her head.*) Is there anythin' ye don't understand? I know them legal words is apt t' mix a lady up.

EMILY. (*Turning away to wipe her eyes without letting him see her.*) No, it's quite clear—quite—

REGAN. Then would ye mind signin' it now? An' I'll give it to Hodges in the mornin'.

EMILY. Where do I sign?

REGAN. There under my name—(*Gives her a pen.*) Look out, it's sort of inky.

EMILY. It's all right.

(*She takes the pen and signs the paper.*)

REGAN. There! *You're* the boss now. You're the boss o' the Fourth Ward! P'raps ye'll be a better one than me!

EMILY. (*Simply.*) Thank you, Michael. (*A pause. He waves the paper to dry it.*) I—I suppose you'll be going to Montreal very soon?

REGAN. Naw.

EMILY. Why not?

REGAN. (*Thumb towards window.*) Look at them bars. Ain't they a good reason?

EMILY. But, Michael—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) I might as well tell ye right now. I don't stand much show o' gettin' out o' here.

EMILY. You mean—on account of Don?

(*Slight pause.*)

REGAN. (*Looking away.*) Yeah.

(*Another pause.*)

EMILY. Then you don't know?

REGAN. Know what?

EMILY. That it's all right? That he's going to get well?

REGAN. (*Joyfully.*) Naw!

EMILY. That's what Dr. Jameson says. He operated at two o'clock.

REGAN. To-day!

EMILY. And Don knew me before I left the hospital.

REGAN. (*Spontaneously.*) Aw gee, I'm glad! I'm awful glad!

EMILY. (*Looking away.*) Yes, it means a lot to you, too, does n't it?

REGAN. (*Suddenly shy.*) Well, I—I was n't thinkin' of meself just then.

EMILY. (*Still looking away.*) So you can probably go North, after all.

REGAN. Yeah. I s'pose I can. (*He has the package of papers* DAVIS *left.*) I s'pose I can. But—somehow I guess I won't.

(*He tears up the papers, carefully, methodically, and drops them in the basket.*)

EMILY. Michael, what—what are those papers?

REGAN. (*Looking at the pieces.*) My contracts with Montreal. Or wot's left of 'em.

EMILY. You're giving that up, too?

REGAN. It looks that way.

EMILY. But why? You don't have to.

REGAN. (*Bitterly.*) Can't I do a decent thing sometimes just fer the fun of it?

EMILY. You don't mean—you're doing it for yourself?

REGAN. (*Sourly.*) Well, I ain't doin' it fer anyone else, am I? (*A pause.*)

EMILY. (*With growing emotion.*) Michael, I sided against you yesterday.

REGAN. (*Under his breath.*) I know that.

EMILY. Well, you'd done so many dreadful things, and I knew how you felt about Don. When you told me, it all seemed to go together. I—I could n't think—

REGAN. Don't begin on that again! Please!

EMILY. But now—Michael, look at me!

(*He does so. A pause.*)

EMILY. (*Putting her hands on his shoulders.*) It's all right. I'm sure now. I know you did n't do it.

REGAN. (*Imploring.*) Ye don't mean ye believe me?

EMILY. Yes, and oh, Michael! You've got to forgive me for not believing you before! (*She takes his hand.*)

REGAN. (*Roughly.*) Quit it! Don't!

EMILY. (*Taking both hands.*) But I'll make up for it—you see! And now we're going to turn our backs on everything that's happened. We're going to look up! We're going to look ahead! We're going to start all over, you and I, together!

REGAN. Aw quit it, don't talk that way! Go home! Go way, d' ye hear? Leave me be, I tell ye! Leave me be!

EMILY. I won't! I can't! I married you, Michael, and when a woman marries a man I believe she promises all sorts of things I've never lived up to. But now you need me and I can help you—why, I think it's a good time to begin!

REGAN. Ye don't mean yer willing t' do all that—fer me?

EMILY. Willing? Why, I want to. Don't you see? *I want to!* (*Pause.*)

REGAN. (*Collecting himself.*) Thank ye. Thank ye kindly. I know yer just say-

ing that t' make things easy fer me, but I 'm—I 'm awful obliged to ye.

EMILY. I 'm *not*, Michael! You don't understand, you—

REGAN. (*Interrupting.*) Gee, I 've been sort o' feelin' our finish comin' on fer the last six months, an' now—all of a sudden—it 's right here. An' somehow I can look it in the face an' keep on smilin' just the same.

EMILY. What do you mean?

REGAN. You was right when you said that you an' me have got t' start all over again. Only this time we got t' start alone.

EMILY. But, Michael—

REGAN. Now, wait a second, Em'ly. I guess we need n't bother much. now we 're at the end. If anyone could a-pulled this off, why, we 'd a-been the ones. But we did n't have no show. We was in all wrong, dead wrong, from the very beginnin'.

EMILY. Was it—so wrong?

REGAN. Yeah. I was wrong in thinkin' I could ever make ye happy an' you was wrong—well, in thinkin' ye could ever let me try. I guess 't was my fault, mostly. You was doin' it fer a bunch o' scoopers, an' I was just out fer meself—like I always been. I might a-known there could n't be nothin' between us two—a guy born in a back room over a bar an' a lady like yerself—

EMILY. Don't! Please don't!

REGAN. D' ve know one thing I learned from bein' with ye this way? An' gee! I don't see just wot good it 's ever goin' t' do me! (*Slowly and with difficulty.*) Folks have t' love each other awful hard before they can get married. If you an' me had done that—why, we could a-stood up an' looked the world in the eye an' told it t' go t' hell! But as it is—

(*His voice breaks.*)

EMILY. Michael!

REGAN. It 's all right, the bill 's paid, the account 's closed. An' if there 's any fergivin' t' be done, I 'll do my share. I hope Gawd gives ye everythin' ye never could get from me—an' that ye live happy—an' grow old slow—an' good luck t' ye now, me darlin'! Good luck t' ye an' good-bye!

(*He turns away.*)

(*The door opens and* THE INSPECTOR *comes in.*)

THE INSPECTOR. Mr. Regan?

REGAN. Well?

THE INSPECTOR. That man, McCoy—

REGAN. (*Sharply.*) Huh?

THE INSPECTOR. It 's all right, sir. He let out the whole thing. (REGAN *smothers an exclamation.*) He went downstairs to Judge Swain and made an affidavit. The Judge has ordered your release and you can leave us, Mr. Regan, any time you like.

REGAN. Porky—!

EMILY. (*In a low voice, to* THE INSPECTOR.) *He* did it, then?

THE INSPECTOR. That 's what he 's sworn to, ma'am. (*A pause.*)

EMILY. Would you call my chauffeur? I 'm—I 'm going to take my husband home.

THE INSPECTOR. (*Softly.*) Sure, ma'am—sure. (*He goes out.*)

EMILY. (*Turning to* REGAN.) Michael, there 's something I 've never told you.

REGAN. (*Dully.*) Is there?

EMILY. I 've never told you, because I never knew it until now.

REGAN. Did n't ye?

EMILY. Can't you guess what it is?

REGAN. I 'm no good at guessin' when it comes t' you.

EMILY. All right, then, I 'll tell you. I think—I think—I think it 's going to be all right.

REGAN. *Wot 's* goin' to be all right?

(*She runs over to the clothes rack.*)

EMILY. Is this your overcoat?—(*Taking it from the rack.*) Here now—put it on. (*She holds it for him.*) And your hat—(*He starts to take it.*) Wait! I 'll show you how you 'll have to wear it now. (*She puts it on his head. He pushes it on one side.*) No—straight! (*She straightens it.*) Quite straight! It 's always bothered me before.

REGAN. (*Feeling it gingerly.*) Like that?

EMILY. Like that. Now take it off!

REGAN. Why?

EMILY. (*Half-laughing, half-crying.*) D' you think I 'm going to let you kiss me with it on?

(*He throws his hat across the room and catches her in his arms as the curtain falls.*)

HE AND SHE

BY

Rachel Crothers

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HE AND SHE

He and She represents the drama of married life in which the relations of husband and wife are modified by the rival claims of professional jealousy. It is one of the most striking of the plays which deal with the general question of woman's rights and responsibilities, of which its author has stood for some time as a representative in drama.

Rachel Crothers was born in Bloomington, Illinois, and graduated from the State Normal School. Her father, Dr. Eli Kirk Crothers, was a friend and contemporary of Lincoln, while her mother studied medicine after she was forty years of age, and became the first woman physician in that part of Illinois. In a letter to the editor written in response to his request for biographical details, Miss Crothers says:

"My interest in the stage was entirely foreign to the deeply religious conservative traditions of my family but began when I was very small, asserting itself through the writing of plays—the first one to be produced being *Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining, or the Ruined Merchant,* all five of the characters played by myself and a friend at the age of twelve—to an invited audience of amazed and admiring friends."

After her graduation from school, Miss Crothers studied dramatic art in Boston and New York and was for three seasons on the stage. She then began seriously writing plays. Her first play to be professionally produced was a clever one-act sketch, *The Rector,* played at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, April 3, 1902, dealing with the choice of a wife by a young clergyman. Then followed *The Three of Us,* performed at the Madison Square Theatre, October, 1906; *The Coming of Mrs. Patrick,* at the same theatre, October, 1907; *Myself Bettina,* first played by Maxine Elliott at Powers Theatre, Chicago, January, 1908; *A Man's World,* played by Mary Mannering at the Comedy Theatre, New York, Feb. 8, 1910; *The Herfords* (*He and She*) (1912); *Young Wisdom,* played by Mabel and Edith Talliaferro at the Criterion Theatre, New York, January, 1914; *Ourselves,* played by Grace Elliston at the Lyric Theatre, New York, November, 1913; *The Heart of Paddy Whack,* played by Chauncey Olcott at the Grand Opera House, New York, November, 1914. *Old Lady 31,* after a tryout on the road, opened at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, New York City, on October 30, 1916, and had a successful run. Her most recent plays were *A Little Journey,* which was first played at the Little Theatre, New York, December 26, 1918, and *39 East,* which opened at the Broadhurst Theatre, March 31, 1919.

He and She was first tried out on the road during the fall of 1911. It was then renamed *The Herfords* and was first played by the cast as here given at the Plymouth Theatre in Boston, February 5, 1912.

After extensive revision, the play was revived and produced at the Little Theatre, New York, February 12, 1920, under the title *He and She*. At this revival Miss Crothers herself played the part of "Ann Herford," Mr. Cyril Keightley that of "Tom Herford" and Miss Faire Binney that of "Millicent."

The most significant of Miss Crothers' plays are those in which she deals with a problem created by some demand of woman's nature. In *The Three of Us* she shows the strong sisterly affection of a woman for her younger brother who is hardly worthy of it but who is saved by the power of her love. In *A Man's World* she attacks the basis of social and moral law which treats the woman unfairly. In *Ourselves* she shows the responsibility of good women for the so-called double standard of morality. In *He and She* she draws in a masterly way the effect which the rivalry of a wife in an artistic profession has upon the relations of her husband and herself and also upon her treatment of her daughter.

A Man's World has been published by Richard Badger; *The Rector, Young Wisdom* and *The Three of Us* by Samuel French. *He and She* is now printed for the first time through the courtesy of the author, from a manuscript prepared especially by her for this collection. In order to reflect the changes made in the revival of 1920, in the Revised Edition, the entire play has been reprinted from a revised manuscript furnished by Miss Crothers.

Note to Third Edition.

In *Nice People,* first played at the Klaw Theatre, New York, March 2, 1921, Miss Crothers drew a strong picture of a certain form of social life which developed in this country after the Great War. It was a popular success. *Everyday,* which was first played in Atlantic City, October 27, 1921, while an interesting study of the revolt of a young girl against the stifling circumstances of her life in a small town, did not succeed. *Mary the Third* began on February 5, 1923, a long run at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, New York. It revealed the differences in the points of view of three generations of women toward the question of marriage. *Expressing Willie,* produced by the Equity Players, April 16, 1924, at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, was a clever satire on the artificial efforts at self expression of certain social types.

Nice People was published in *Contemporary American Plays,* edited by A. H. Quinn, New York, 1923. *Mary the Third, Old Lady 31* and *A Little Journey* were issued together in one volume in 1923. *Expressing Willie, 39 East* and *Nice People* were published in one volume in 1924, also by Brentano.

Note to Fourth Edition.

A Lady's Virtue, first produced in Chicago, October, 1925, dealt with the haracter of the eternal courtesan, and her struggle with the claims of a wife ho is not her mental equal. While not up to Miss Crothers' standard, it was popular success. *Venus,* produced in December, 1927 in New York, dealt ith an improbable situation and was quickly withdrawn.

The Heart of Paddy Whack and *Once Upon A Time* were published in 1925 y Samuel French.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Plymouth Theatre, Boston, February 5, 1912

TOM HERFORD, a sculptor.....Mr. Charles Waldro

ANN HERFORD, his wife.....Miss Viola Alle

DAISY HERFORD, his sister.....Miss Grace Ellisto

MILLICENT, his daughter.....Miss Beatrice Prentic

DR. REMINGTON, his father-in-law.....Mr. George Fawce

KEITH MCKENZIE, his assistant.....Mr. John Westld

RUTH CREEL, his wife's friend.....Miss Jessie Izett

ELLEN, a maid.....Miss Emily Varia

HE AND SHE

ACT FIRST

Scene: The Herford Studio.

The room is in the basement floor of a large old fashioned house in lower New York—and shows that it has been made over and adapted to the needs of a sculptor.

At right center back are double doors opening into the workroom. At right of these doors is a recess showing it has been cut in. The ceiling of the half of the room which is towards the audience is much higher than the other part—showing that the room which is on the floor above has been used to give height to this part of the studio.

The break made in the ceiling is supported by an interesting old carved column—very evidently brought from Italy—and in the overhanging part of the wall is set a very beautiful old Italian frieze in bas relief—a few faded colors showing.

At lower left is a large studio window.

At lower right side a single door leading into hall. At upper left corner, a cupboard is built in, in harmony with the construction of the room, and showing, when opened, drawers and compartments for holding sculptors' tools, etc.

Before the window, at right center, is a scaffold built to hold a section of a frieze. At its base is a revolving table, holding modeling clay, tools, etc. In front of the scaffold is a short pair of steps. At centre, is a long table holding rolls of sketches, a desk set—a book or two, pencils, compasses, several pieces of modeling.

There are a number of chairs about and a piece of rich brocade in vivid coloring thrown over the back of one.

The room is simple, dignified, beautiful, full of taste and strength. Soft afternoon sunshine streams in from the wide window. KEITH MACKENZIE *and* TOM HERFORD *are lifting one section of a bas relief frieze about 3 by 5—and placing it on the scaffolding.*

MCKENZIE *is about 35, tall, good-looking, in a pleasing, common-place way; also wearing a sculptor's working clothes—but of a practical and not artistic sort.*

TOM HEREFORD *is 40, a fine specimen of the vigorous American-artist type. Virile, fresh, alive and generous in nature and viewpoint. He wears the stamp of confidence and success.*

TOM. (*As they lift the frieze.*) Come on! There she is! Put her over—no, this way, about half a foot. That's right. There! Let's have a look. (TOM *goes down to hanging switch and turns on the light. As he does so, he says:*) Wait! (*The lights are turned up.*) (*Turning to* KEITH.) What do you think.

KEITH. It's a great thing, Governor! Going to be a walk-away for you. You'll win it as sure as guns. I *know* it. I bet you land the $100,000.00 as sure as you're standing there, governor.

TOM. Oh, I don't know. The biggest fellows in the country are going in for this competition.

KEITH. Well— you're *one* of the biggest. *I* think you're *the* biggest—and you've turned out the best thing you've ever done in your life. (*Going to stand above table.*)

TOM. That's damned nice of you, McKenzie. It *does* look pretty good out here. Doesn't it? (*He goes up on the steps—to touch the frieze.*)

KEITH. (*After a pause.*) Governor.

TOM. (*Working at his frieze.*) Um?

KEITH. I want to ask you something. Not from curiosity—but because—I'd like to know for my own sake. You needn't answer of course—if you don't want to.

TOM. Go on. Fire away.

KEITH. Have you ever been sorry that Mrs. Herford is a sculptor—instead of just your wife?

TOM. Not for a minute.

KEITH. I've been thinking a lot about it all lately.

TOM. About you and Ruth. you mean?

KEITH. Yes. She'll marry me in the fall if I let her keep on working.

TOM. And?

KEITH. Well—I—Hang it all! I don't *want* her to. I can take care of her now. At first it was different—when I was grubbing along—but since I've been with you, you've put me on my feet. I'll never be *great*—I know that all right—but I can take care of her.

TOM. (*Working at frieze.*) But she *wants* to keep on, doesn't she?

KEITH. Yes, but—

TOM. Good Heavens, boy—you're not bitten with that bug I hope. "I want my girl by my own fireside to live for me alone."

KEITH. Oh—

TOM. Why Ruth Creel's a howling success—the way she's climbed up in that magazine—why in the name of Christopher, do you want her to stop?

KEITH. (*At right end of table, figuring mechanically on some papers on table.*) How can she keep on at that and keep house too?

TOM. Well they *do*, you know—somehow.

KEITH. Oh, Mrs. Herford's different. She's working right here with you—and her time is her own. But Ruth's tied down to office hours and it's slavery—that's what it is.

TOM. *She* doesn't think so. Does she?

KEITH. I want a home. I want children.

TOM. Of course. But that doesn't mean she'll have to give up her profession forever.

KEATH. Oh, I'm strong for women doing anything they want to do—in *general*—But when it's the girl you love and want to marry, it's different.

TOM. It ought not to be.

KEITH. When you come down to brass tacks—

ANN. (*Coming quickly in from the workroom, and stopping as she sees the frieze.*) Oh Tom!

(ANN HERFORD *is 38. Intensely feminine and a strong vibrating personality which radiates warmth and vitality. She wears a long linen working smock—a soft rich red in color. Her sleeves are rolled up and her general appearance shows that she is at work and has stopped only to look at* TOM'S *frieze.*)

KEITH. Looks great out here—doesn't it, Mrs. Herford?

ANN. Um.

KEITH. Aren't you—more sure now than ever it will win?

ANN. Um. — (*Starting to speak and checking herself.*)

TOM. What?

ANN. Nothing Your horses *are* marvelous, Tom. I wish we could see it all together—now. Don't you? The rest of the twenty sections—so we could see how much we—how much we—*feel* the running.

TOM. Don't you feel it in this piece?

ANN. Of course.

KEITH. I do—tremendously. I think it's wonderful. (*He goes into workroom.*)

TOM. Ann—what were you going to say a minute ago about the frieze?

ANN. A—I don't know.

TOM. Don't hedge. Several times lately you've started to say something and haven't got it out. What is it? Any suggestions?

ANN. How do you feel about it yourself, boy? Are you satisfied?

TOM. Does that mean you aren't?

ANN. I asked you.

TOM. Well—it's the best that's in me. Why? What's the matter? You don't like it after all.

ANN. Like it? It's a strong—noble—beautiful thing.

TOM. *But*—

ANN. Dearest—is it—just exactly what your first conception of it was? Has it turned out just as you first felt it?

TOM. Why yes—not absolutely in detail of course. It's improved a lot I think—in the working—but in the main, yes—it's *just* the same. Why do you say that?

ANN. You know of course, but—

TOM. Say it—Say it. What have you got in your mind?

ANN. I don't know that I can—but in the beginning it had a feeling of swiftness, of rushing—swirling—as if your soul were let loose in it, Tom—too big, too free to be held in and confined. But, somehow, now that it's finished—

TOM. Go on.

ANN. That wild thing has gone out of it. It's crystalized into something magnificent but a little conventional.

TOM. Good heavens, Ann, you can't call that *conventional?*

ANN. Well—orthodox then. It's noble of course—but that inexplainable thing which made it great—is *gone*—for me. Perhaps it's just me—my imagination because I care so much.

TOM. It is imagination. It's much stronger than when I began.

ANN. Is it?

TOM. Of course. You're trying to put something fantastic into it which never was there at all. That's not *me*. What I've done I've got through a certain strong solid boldness. That's why I think this stands a good chance. It's the very best thing I've ever done, Ann, by all—

KIETH. (*Opening the workroom door.*) Governor—will you show Guido and me about something please—Just a minute? (*There is a slight pause.*) (*Tom looks at the frieze.*)

TOM. I don't see what you mean at all, dear girl. Thanks a lot—but I think you're wrong this time. (*He goes into workroom. Ann looks again at the frieze as* RUTH CREEL *comes in from hall.*)

ANN. (*Going quickly to* RUTH.) Oh, Ruth—bless you! (*She kisses her warmly.*)

RUTH. I came straight from the office and I'm dirty as a pig. (ANN *points to* TOM'S *frieze.*) Is that it? (ANN *nods.*) Well?

ANN. Oh, Ruth—I'm sick in the bottom of my soul. I hope—I hope—I'm wrong. I *must* be wrong. Tom knows better than I do; but—I can't help it. I tell myself I'm a fool—and the more I try to persuade myself the more it comes back. Ruth, it isn't the same. It isn't. What ever it was that lifted it above good work and made it a thing of inspiration—is gone. It's gone—*gone*.

RUTH. Have you—told Tom how you feel?

ANN. Just this minute. He says I'm wrong absolutely—that it's the best thing he's ever done.

RUTH. I hope to God you are wrong—but I bet you're not. You *know*. Did you—have you told him the other thing?

ANN. Not yet. But I've finished it.

RUTH. Absolutely?

ANN. I worked down here last night till three o'clock this morning.

RUTH. Well—how is it?

ANN. Oh, I don't dare think. It can't be as good as it seems to me.

RUTH. *Of course* it can. Why shouldn't it be? Aren't you going to offer it to him right away—before it's too late?

ANN. How *can* I? It frightens me to pieces to even think of it—but, oh,—my dear, my dear—it's alive and fresh and *new*. It is. It is. If he only would take it—my idea—and put his wonderful work—his wonderful execution into it.

RUTH. Perhaps he'll be *fired* with it—jump at it.

ANN. I'm afraid, he won't—and I'm afraid of *this* for him. It would nearly kill him to lose. He's counting on winning. Keith and everybody are so dead sure of him.

RUTH. Show him yours for goodness—

ANN. Be careful. He'll be back in a minute.

RUTH. I'll skip upstairs and make myself presentable.

ANN. Go in my room, dear. (RUTH *goes out through hall.* TOM *and* KEITH *come back from workroom.* ANN *goes to* TOM *—they stand a moment—looking at the frieze.* ANN *slaps* TOM *on the back, without speaking, and goes on into workroom.*)

KEITH. (*After a pause.*) I agree with you in general, governor. But when it comes down to the girl you love and want to marry, it's different.

TOM. Why is it?

KEITH. The world has got to have homes to live in and who's going to make 'em if the women don't do it?

TOM. (*Smiling at* KEITH *tolerantly.*) Oh, come—come.

KEITH. Do you mean to say you wouldn't rather your sister Daisy was married and keeping her own house instead of working here as your secretary?

TOM. But she *isn't* married— and she won't live with Ann and me unless it's a business proposition. I respect her *tremendously* for it—tremendously.

KEITH. Well, Daisy's a big, plucky, independent thing anyway—but Ruth's a little delicate fragile—

TOM. With a mind bigger than most of the *men* you know.

KEITH. Oh, mind be damned. I want a wife.

DAISY. (*Coming in from the hall.*) Oh —Tom—it's out here. How corking! (DAISY HERFORD *is twenty-eight—strong, wholesome, handsome, with the charm of health and freshness. She wears a severe serge gown and carries a pencil and stenographer's pad.*)

TOM. Well—sis, how do you like it?

DAISY. I adore it. I hope you haven't any doubts now about winning.

TOM. I've plenty of 'em—but somehow today it looks as if it stood a pretty good chance.

DAISY. Chance! I never was so sure of anything in my life.

KEITH. Daisy—maybe you know just *what* ought to be *where* with *this stuff.*

DAISY. I've been itching to get at it. Let's put all the tools on that side.

KEITH. I *have* started.

DAISY. And throw the trash in here. (*Pushing the box with her foot.*)

KEITH. Can you help me now?

DAISY. Yes. Tom, do you want me to write to the Ward people about that marble again?

TOM. Yes I do. Shake them up. Tell 'em if it isn't here by the first of the month I won't take it.

DAISY. (*Making a note in her note-book.*) Um—um.

MILLICENT HERFORD *rushes in from hall at left.* MILLICENT *is 16—pretty—eager—full of vitality and will—half child, half woman. She is charmingly dressed in an afternoon frock and picture hat and is at the moment happy and exhilarated.*)

MILLICENT. Father, where's mother?

TOM. In the work-room. But you can't go in. (*As* MILLICENT *starts to work-room.*)

MILLICENT. Why not?

TOM. She's finishing something and said not to let *any* one stop her.

MILLICENT. Oh *dear!* I think I *might.* It's awfully important. Couldn't I just poke my head in the door a minute?

TOM. Not for a second.

MILLICENT. Sakes, I wish Mother wouldn't work in my Christmas vacation. It's an awful bore. Don't you think she might stop the little while I'm at home, Aunt Daisy?

DAISY. None of my business. Don't ask me.

KEITH. If you ask *me*—yes I think she might.

TOM. That's nonsense. Your mother's doing about everything that *can* be done to make your vacation a success, isn't she?

MILLICENT. Yes, of course.

TOM. Then I don't see that there's any reason why she shouldn't be allowed a little time for herself.

MILLICENT. But I want her *now.* Aren't my new pumps stemmy, Aunt Daisy?

DAISY. Aren't they what?

MILLICENT. Stemmy. Wake up, Aunt Daisy. Oh, the luncheon was gorgeous. All the girls were there and the matinee was heavenly.

KEITH. What play?

MILLICENT. "The Flame of Love." You needn't laugh, father. It's the best play in town. The leading man is a peach. Honestly, he's the best looking thing I ever saw in my life. We were all crazy about him. Belle Stevens took off her violets and threw them right *at* him. She makes me tired, though. I don't think seventeen is so terribly much older than sixteen, do you, Aunt Daisy?

DAISY. (*Still at the cupboard.*) It depends on whether you're sixteen or seventeen—how much older it is.

MILLICENT. I don't care—I wouldn't wear a ring as big as hers if I had one. Oh, Aunt Daisy, may I borrow your earrings? (*Going to* DAISY.)

DAISY. Help yourself.

MILLICENT. Thanks, you're a duck. I could combostulate you for that. How much longer do you think mother will be, daddie?

TOM. Couldn't say.

MILLICENT. Well, tell her I *have* to see her the minute she comes out. Don't forget. (*She hurries off through hall.*

TOM. She's grown up over night somehow. I can't get used to it.

KEITH. And she went away to school a few months ago just a girl. Amazing, isn't it?

DAISY. Not a bit. What do you expect? She's free now—cut loose. Boarding school does that pretty quickly.

TOM. I suppose so—and I suppose it's good for her. (*Looking at the frieze he goes into the work-room.*)

KEITH. The Governor's darned cheerful about the frieze to-day.

DAISY. I should think he *would* be. It's great. (KEITH *and* DAISY *go on clearing out cupboard.*)

KEITH. I'd give a good deal to know what Mrs. Herford actually thinks of it.

DAISY. Why she *loves* it.

KEITH. She looks at it with such a sort of a—I don't know. I can't help wondering if she *is* so dead certain of it as the rest of us are.

DAISY. I hope she doesn't discourage Tom. After all *he* likes it and he knows more about it than anybody else. Ann's criticism is wonderful, of course, but still Tom *is the artist.*

KEITH. You're just as jealous for your brother as you can be, aren't you, Daisy? All right for the missus to be clever, but you want Tom to be supreme in everything, don't you?

DAISY. He *is*. (*Leaning over the box.*)

KEITH. You're a brick. Daisy, have you ever been in love in your life?

DAISY. What do you mean? (*Lifting her head—startled and embarrassed.*)

KEITH. I've been thinking an awful lot lately about this business of married women working. What do *you* think of it—now honestly?

DAISY. What difference does it make—what I think?

KEITH. Of course, there's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be in it. You don't care a hang for men—and—

DAISY. You mean men don't care a hang for me.

KEITH. No I don't. I don't mean that at all. But you're so independent men are sort of afraid of you.

DAISY. Oh, don't apologize. You mean I'm a plain, practical girl meant to take care of myself.

KEITH. Well—that's what you *want* to be, isn't it?

DAISY. Never mind about me. Let's change the subject.

KEITH. You needn't be so touchy. I talk awfully frankly about my affairs and you never say a word about yourself.

DAISY. Why should I? I'm not interesting and you're not interested.

KEITH. I am too. You're the best pal a fellow ever had. I don't know any other girl I could have worked with all his time—day in and day out and not either been dead sick of or sort of—you know sweet on, in a way.

DAISY. You needn't rub it in.

KEITH. Why, Daisy, old girl, what *is* the matter? What in the dickens are you so huffy about?

DAISY. Just let me and my idiosyncrasies alone, please.

KEITH. Heavens! Can't I say what I think?

DAISY. No, you can't. I don't want to hear it. I know just what I seem like to other people—so there's no use explaining me to myself.

KEITH. All I meant was if you *were* in love would you give up your job and—

DAISY. But I'm *not* in love, so stop thinking about it.

KEITH. Gosh! I thought *you* had common sense, but you're just as queer as the rest of them. What I want to know is—if a girl loves a man well enough to marry him why in hell she can't stay at home and—

DAISY. What's the matter? (*As* KEITH *cuts his finger on the tool he is holding.*) Did you cut your finger?

KEITH. Not much.

DAISY. (*With a sudden tenderness.*) Let me see.

KEITH. It's nothing.

DAISY. It is too. Hold still. I'll tie it up for you. (*She ties his finger with her own handkerchief.*) Anything the—hold still. Anything the matter with one of your fingers would put you out of commission.

KEITH. Might be a good idea. I don't think Ruth believes in me much. Doesn't think I'll get much farther.

DAISY. (*Warmly.*) I don't know why. I think you've got plenty for her to believe in. Well—speaking of angels. How are you, Ruth? (*As* RUTH *comes in from the hall.*)

KEITH. Oh—hello, dear.

RUTH. Hello. What's the matter?

KEITH. Nothing.

DAISY. KEITH was waxing emphatic about *you* and over emphasized a finger. (*She turns back to cupboard.*)

RUTH. I'm sorry. (*Touching* KEITH'S *hand as he comes down to her.*)

KEITH. How are you?

RUTH. Dead. This day's been twenty-four hours long. (*Sitting at left end of table.*)

KEITH. (*Coming down to* RUTH.) *Has* anything gone wrong?

RUTH. No—but a young author from the eloquent West has been fighting me since nine o'clock this morning.

KEITH. What about?

RUTH. He's got a perfectly magnificent story—or idea for one, rather—but it's so crudely written that it's impossible to publish it.

DAISY. I suppose you can re-write it for him.

RUTH. No, he won't let me. Wants to do it all himself. Oh, he's so stubborn and so funny and so splendid. So outlandishly conceited and so adorably boyish I wanted to slap him one minute and kiss him the next.

KEITH. Why didn't you do both and you'd have got what you wanted.

RUTH. I was afraid to risk it.
KEITH. (*Nodding towards* TOM'S *frieze.*) Doesn't that hit you in the eye?
RUTH. Awfully like Tom, isn't it? Strong and splendid.
KEITH. What are you thinking—
RUTH. Oh, nothing—only I wish Ann had—I wish Ann had gone in for this competition too.
KEITH. What?
DAISY. Why on earth should she?
RUTH. Why shouldn't she?
DAISY. Ruth, you're daffy about Ann. Always have been.
KEITH. She does beautiful work for a woman—but ye gods—she's not in *this* class.
RUTH. And she never *will* be if she's held back and told she's limited. I think she has genius and the sooner she makes a bold dash and tries for something big the better.
DAISY. Nonsense! Tom's pushed her and believed in her always. You can't say *he's* held her back.
RUTH. (*To* KEITH.) I've heard *you* say she has genius—lots of times.
KEITH. So she has—in a way. She has more imagination than the governor, but, great Peter, when it comes to execution and the real thing she isn't *in* it with him. How could she be? She's a woman.
RUTH. Don't be any more anti-deluvian or prehistoric than you can help, Keith. Don't *you* think Ann's more original and really innately gifted than Tom is, Daisy?
DAISY. *I do not.* She's terribly good. Of course—no doubt about that—but good Lord, Tom's *great*—a really *great* artist. (DAISY *starts to hall door.*)
RUTH. Why do you go, Daisy?
DAISY. Must. I have bushels of letters to get off.
RUTH. You look as fresh and rosy as if you were just beginning the day. How do you do it?
DAISY. Oh, I'm not expressing my soul in my job—merely earning by bread and butter. I suppose that's why I look so husky at twilight. (DAISY *goes out through hall.*)
RUTH. (*Looking after* DAISY.) Do you know—I don't believe Daisy likes me any more.
KEITH. (*Sitting on left end of table near* RUTH.) Kiss me. (RUTH *leans her head towards* KEITH. *He kisses her cheek.*)
RUTH. She's so marvelously good-natured—queer she's getting snappy at me lately.
KEITH. I'm awfully glad you came.
RUTH. Does it hurt? (*Touching his finger.*)
KEITH. Not much.
RUTH. I wonder why she doesn't like me?
KEITH. What are you talking about? I'm asked to stay to dinner, too.
RUTH. That's nice.
KEITH. I can't bear to see you so tired, dear.
RUTH. I'll be all right when I have some tea.
KEITH. This time next year you could be in your own home—away from those damnable office hours and the drudgery—if you only would. If you only *would.*
RUTH. It never seems to occur to you that I might be a little less tired but bored to death without my job.
KEITH. If you really cared for me the way you used to—you wouldn't be bored!
RUTH. Oh let's not begin that.
KEITH. But do you love me, dear. *Do* you?
RUTH. I've been telling you so for a pretty long time, haven't I.
KEITH. Are you tired of it?
RUTH. There isn't any reason on earth why you should *think* I am.
KEITH. Well, I do think it. I worry about it all the time. I know you're brilliant and successful—but you—after all you say you love me—and I don't see— (*He stops with a sigh.*) You're awful pretty today. Your face is like a flower.
RUTH. Oh—
KEITH. Yes, it is. I love you so.
RUTH. Dear old boy! I love you.
KEITH. Do you, Ruth? *Do* you?
RUTH. I've never loved anyone else. You've filled all that side of my life and you've made it beautiful. We must hang together dear— (*Putting both her hands over one of his.*) And understand and give things up for each other. But it must be fifty-fifty, dearest. I can make you happy, Keith—Oh I can. And I'll be so happy and contented with you if you'll only— (KEITH *turns away impatiently.*) I've never had a home for a minute—in my whole life—nor a relative since I was three—of any sort or description—not a soul who belonged to me but you.

KEITH. I want you to have the sweetest little home in the world.

RUTH. Think of having our own little dinners and all the nice people we know at our table—*ours*.

KEITH. Yes—but—*how can you do it if you're away all day?*

RUTH. Oh Keith, dear boy, you—the whole trouble is you think housekeeping is making a home—and the two things aren't the same at all—at all, at all.

KEITH. Well, they can't be separated.

RUTH. Oh, yes, they can. Love—love makes a home—not tables and chairs. We can *afford* more if I work, too. We can *pay* some one to do the stuff you think I ought to do. And you'll go on climbing up in your work and I'll go on in mine and we'll both grow to something and *be* somebody and have something to give each other. It will be fair—we'll be pulling together—pals and lovers like Tom and Ann. That's why they're so ideally happy.

KEITH. Yes, but we're different. We couldn't—

RUTH. You're not fair, Keith.

KEITH. Great guns, Ruth—neither are you.

RUTH. I am. I am perfectly. (*Their voices rise together.*)

TOM. (*Coming back from the workroom.*) What's the row? Hello, Ruthie Creel.

RUTH. (*Giving her hand to* TOM.) Hello, you nice Tommie Herford. I always lose my heart to you in your working clothes.

TOM. You have my heart in any kind of clothes.

RUTH. Keith's cross with me, Tom. You're much nicer to me than he is.

KEITH. You never spring any of your revolutionary speeches on Herford. You save all your really soothing remarks for me.

RUTH. Tom, am I revolutionary? Aren't I just a little cooing dove?

TOM. Absolutely.

DAISY. (*Coming in from hall.*) Dr. Remington's here. Millicent's bringing him down. But he says he wants to sit upstairs on the parlor sofa, not down in the cellar. Tom, will you sign these letters now? (*Daisy puts the letters on the table—*TOM *goes towards the table as* MILLICENT *comes in from the hall bringing* DR. REMINGTON *by the hand.*)

(DR. REMINGTON *is 65. He is inclined to portliness and his keen humor and kindliness are combined with an understanding and wisdom which make him a very strong and a very lovable man. His manner and speech are a little deliberate. He has a twinkling readiness to tease but the weight and dignity of a successful and important physician.*)

TOM. Hello—hello—hello.

REMINGTON. How are you?

KEITH. (*Taking* REMINGTON'S *overcoat.*) How are you, Dr. Remington? (RUTH *comes to the doctor to take his hat and stick.*)

REMINGTON. Hello, McKenzie. And here's that pretty little Ruth thing—knowing so much it makes my head ache.

RUTH. So long as it's your head and not mine I don't mind.

MILLICENT. Oh, thank you for the chocolates, grandfather. They're just the kind I adore. I could absolutely combostulate you— (*Giving him a violent hug.*) Five pounds, daddie.

TOM. You're a fine doctor!

REMINGTON. Chocolate's about the best medicine I know of if you want a girl to love you. Where's your mother?

MILLICENT. In the cave. (*Pointing to workroom.*)

REMINGTON. Can't she be excavated? Go and dig her out.

MILLICENT. They won't let me. You do it.

REMINGTON. Hasn't anybody got the courage to do it? (KEITH *starts towards the door with box.*)

DAISY. Not me.

REMINGTON. Well, McKenzie, go and tell her to let the work go to thunder and come and see her dad. (KEITH *goes into workroom.*) Is that the thing that's going to get the hundred thousand for you?

TOM. If—yes.

REMINGTON. Well, go to it—boy. I hope you hit it. (*Sitting in the large chair at left.*)

TOM. Thanks. I'm doing my durndest. Daisy, you've got some of these dimensions wrong. Keith will have to give them to you again.

DAISY. Oh, I'm sorry.

REMINGTON. It's a good thing you're working for your own brother, Daisy—nobody else would have you.

DAISY. You're the only person in the whole world who isn't impressed with my business ability.

REMINGTON. Stuff! I wager you say in your prayers every night—Oh, Lord, deliver me from this job and get me a good husband.

DAISY. (*Laughing with the others and going to* REMINGTON.) That's a very stemmy tie you're wearing. Do you get me?

REMINGTON. Not exactly. All I know is I'd rather be stemmy than seedy.

KEITH. (*Opening the workroom door.*) Don't you want me to carry that in for you, Mrs. Herford?

ANN. (*From within.*) No, no—I'd rather do it myself.

KEITH. It's too heavy for you.

ANN. No it isn't. (ANN *comes in carrying the figure of a woman in the nude—about a foot high. The figure is in wet clay and stands on a modeling board.*)

TOM. Steady there! Steady! Let me take it.

ANN. Don't touch it!

REMINGTON. Hello there!

ANN. Hello, daddy! I couldn't come out until I finished my lady. Isn't she nice? She's ready to be cast now. Come and look at her, Tom. She isn't so bad?

TOM. She looks pretty good to me.

REMINGTON. She looks a little chilly to me. Why don't you put a full suit of clothes on one of 'em—just for a change, Ann?

ANN. You nice, horrid, sweet, adorable, cross old thing! Why didn't you come yesterday. I don't see why I love you so when you never do anything I want you to.

REMINGTON. If I did I wouldn't be half as irresistible. Aren't you going to stop for the day now and pay a little attention to me?

ANN. I *am*.

MILLICENT. Mother, when can I see you? Alone I mean.

ANN. After awhile. Have you had a nice day, dear?

MILLICENT. Gorgeous! But I have to see you about something.

ANN. You do? (*Holding* MILLICENT.) Look at her—dad. Hasn't she grown?

MILLICENT. Mother, may I stay home from school one more day?

ANN. Gracious! Is that what you want to see me about?

MILLICENT. That's just one thing. Can't I, mother? All the girls are staying over. Mayn't I? Please—please.

ANN. I have to think a little. Let's wait and talk it over. Daisy, aren't we going to have some tea?

DAISY. It will be ready in a minute.

REMINGTON. Thank God! Then we'll go upstairs.

ANN. No, down here—it's much nicer. You'll have to get used to it, dad.

MILLICENT. Well—you be thinking—but you be thinking—*yes*—for I've just got to stay over. I've just got to. It would be perfectly ridiculous if I didn't. (*She goes out through hall.*)

REMINGTON. (*Nodding after* MILLICENT.) Getting more like you every day, Ann.

ANN. She's *your* grandchild, you know.

REMINGTON. I like 'em that way. I'd rather she was stubborn as a mule than have a wabbly spine.

ANN. (*Taking off her smock.*) But a little wabbling once in a while is rather a pleasant thing to live with. For instance, it would make me very happy indeed if you wabbled enough to admit that this is a beautiful studio and that having it in the house where we live is the most sensible thing in the world.

REMINGTON. It would be all right if you'd stay upstairs and mind your own business. Tom, if you don't look out you'll be so mixed up you'll be upstairs keeping house and Ann will be downstairs keeping shop.

TOM. I don't know how I'd keep house—but Ann could keep shop all right.

REMINGTON. Is that the way you feel about it, McKenzie? When you're married are you going to stay at home and polish up while Ruth goes on running the magazine?

KEITH. It looks as if that's about the way it'll have to be.

RUTH. (*Bringing the cake down to table.*) That's a splendid suggestion, Dr. Remington. Keith thinks somebody's got to do it for a successful marriage—and I won't—so why not you, dear? (*Pointing at* KEITH.) (KEITH *looks at* RUTH *and turns away in hopeless disgust.*)

REMINGTON. (*Winking at* RUTH *and lowering his voice to her.*) Keep at it. He'll come to it. (ANN *laughs as she cuts the cake.*)

KEITH. I don't see that it's so funny.

REMINGTON. (*Going to table to get piece of cake.*) You bet it's not funny. Daisy, would you like your husband to wash the dishes if you happened to be too much occupied to do it yourself?

DAISY. I'd kill him if he did. (*Bringing the cream and sugar to large table.*)

REMINGTON. Oh—well—with one perfectly normal woman in the room I'm much more comfortable. (*He settles himself elaborately in his chair at left.*)

KEITH. I'm serious. I'd like to know if there's anything queer or preposterous in a fellow wanting a girl to give up hard, slavish work and let him take care of her when she marries him.

RUTH. When she wants to do the work. Don't leave that out.

TOM. I don't see that you, Keith, or any other fellow has got any kick coming so long as the girl makes you happy.

KEITH. I'd like to hear your angle on it if you don't mind, doctor.

RUTH. Yes. Keith loves to hear his mid-Victorian ideas well supported.

REMINGTON. Oh, I'm not so moth-eaten as I may look. In fact, I'm a damned sight more advanced than you women are. You're still yelling about your right to do anything on land or sea you want to do. We gave you that long ago.

ANN. So nice of you!

RUTH. (*Sitting below the table at right.*) Why talk about it all then? What else is there to it?

REMINGTON. Put this in your pipe. The more women make good—the more they come into the vital machinery of running the world, the more they complicate their own lives and the more tragedies they lay up for themselves.

RUTH. The more they escape—you mean.

ANN. (*As she pours the tea.*) There isn't a sigle hard thing that can happen to a woman that isn't made easier by being able to make her own living. And you know it.

REMINGON. Oh. It's a hopeless subject for conversation. What everybody says is true. There's the rub.

DAISY. Two?

REMINGTON. Three. (KEITH *gives a cup of tea to* REMINGTON.)

TOM. Go on. What were you going to say?

ANN. Yes, go on, dad.

REMINGTON. (*To Ann.*) You hang on to yourself then till I get through. The development of women hasn't changed the laws of creation.

ANN. Oh yes it has. (REMINGTON *looks at her.*) Sorry. Go on.

REMINGTON. Sex is still the strongest force in the world. (*He looks at* ANN *again.*)

ANN. (*Smiling.*) Go on.

REMINGTON. And no matter how far she goes she doesn't change the fundamental laws of her own—

TOM. Individuality?

RUTH. Type?

DAISY. Character?

KEITH. Ego.

RUTH. Psychology.

ANN. Species.

TOM. Breed.

DAISY. Spots.

REMINGTON. *No!*—Mechanism—mechanism. And when the sensitive—involved—complex elements of a woman's nature become entangled in the responsibilitiy of a man's work—and the two things fight for first place in her—she's got a hell of a mess on hand.

ANN. But her psychological mechanism *has* changed.

REMINGTON. No.

ANN. Yes.

TOM. Yes, I think it has.

KEITH. It couldn't.

RUTH. But it *has*. Women who are really doing things nowadays are an absolutely different breed from the one-sided domestic animals they used to be.

ANN. But men don't realize how deeply and fiercely creative women love their work.

REMINGTON. That's just it—Just what I'm getting at. A woman of genius puts in her work the same fierce love she puts into her child or her man. That's where her fight is—for one or the other of 'em has got to be the stronger in her. It isn't a question of her *right* to do things—nor her ability—God knows—plenty of 'em are beating men at their own jobs now. Why, I sometimes think she'll go so far that the great battle of the future will be between the sexes for supremacy. But I tell you—she has tragedies ahead of her—the tragedy of choice between the two sides of her own nature.

RUTH. Well, thank you—I'll take any and all of the hard things that go *with* my job—but none of the ones that come from being a dub and giving it up.

REMINGTON. How about you, Daisy? Could any man on earth make you stop typewriting and live for him alone?

DAISY. Oh, I'm not in this class. Ann and Ruth both have men to depend on if they want them. I'm taking care of myself because I've *got* to—and I must say this soul tragedy of choice stuff makes me a little tired. (*She starts toward hall.*)

REMINGTON. (*Stopping* DAISY *by taking her hand.*) If I were twenty or thirty years younger, I'd go in for you strong.

DAISY. Yes, I know—I'm just the kind that *older* men appreciate very deeply. (*She goes out.*)

REMINGTON. Poor Daisy.

ANN. Poor Daisy. She's the happiest, most independent thing in the world. (*Straightening the things on the table* —KEITH *having taken the tea tray away.*)

RUTH. Much to be envied. No strings to *her* independence.

KEITH. And so cocky and spunky—nobody can even ask her if she's ever been in love.

REMINGTON. Sure sign she has been then.

TOM. But she never has.

REMINGTON. How do you know?

TOM. I've been pretty close to her all my life. No blighted bud about Daisy.

REMINGTON. She's putting up a darned good bluff, I must say.

RUTH. Bluff? What do you mean?

ANN. Father thinks there isn't a girl alive who wouldn't rather have a beau than a job.

REMINGTON. I do. And Daisy *looks* so self-reliant she *has* to be cocky to keep up appearances. Under her skin, she's not half the man that little lady-like looking thing Ruth is.

RUTH. Now, Dr. Remington, you may go upstairs.

REMINGTON. I haven't time now. I've wasted it all down here.

RUTH. Oh, come and look at the living room just a minute. It's too beautiful.

REMINGTON. Has it got a carpet on it yet?

ANN. Yes, absolutely finished.

REMINGTON. Because I don't mind saying my feet are like ice from this confounded brick floor.

RUTH. Oh, the beautiful tiles!

REMINGTON. I'll take a little less Italian beauty and a little more American comfort in mine. (RUTH, REMINGTON *and* KEITH *go out through hall.*)

TOM. (*Stopping* ANN *as she starts with the others.*) Ann—about this thing. Why in the name of heaven didn't you say you were disappointed in it long ago?

ANN. I kept hoping each day I was mistaken; that what I missed would come back. But when I saw it out here—I'm afraid of it, Tom.

TOM. Afraid of what? That I'll fail? Lose it? (ANN *nods.*) Nonsense! You're tired of it. There can't be such a change in it as all that. The idea's absolutely the same and I've *worked* as I never—

ANN. I know. I know! And oh, the beauty—the beauty of the work! That's the pity.

TOM. Pity?

ANN. I mean somebody without *half* your skill as an artist may have an idea—an *idea* that's *new*.

TOM. Oh bosh! Nothing can be done, anyhow. It's too late. Besides, I don't agree with you. I honestly do not, Ann. I know you're saying this because you're trying to boost me and get the best out of me; but the thing's done, you know. Don't confuse me. I must go on now. What's the use of talking about it? It's too late.

ANN. No, it isn't.

TOM. It is. Of course it is. You can't expect me to begin all over again and put into it a subtle intangible something I don't even feel. Damn it? I will have to fail then.

ANN. (*Taking hold of Tom quickly.*) I can't. You've got to win, Tom. You've *got* to. It's the most important thing you've ever done. Think of where it will put you. Think of the money.

TOM. I *have* thought. I've done the best that's *in* me, I tell you. It *is* the best the very best I've ever—

ANN. But it isn't. It isn't. It isn't as great as your last two things—

TOM. Oh—

ANN. Tom—listen—you don't know how hard it is to say it. I'd rather you would this than anything that could possibly happen. You know that. Don't you?

TOM. Of course. But this isn't getting anywhere. It will have to go in as it stands.

ANN. Wait—I—I've wanted to talk to you about something for a long time—but I wasn't sure—and now I *am*.

TOM. Well—

ILLICENT. (*Coming back through hall.*) Thank goodness, mother. I can't wait any longer.

NN. (*To* MILLICENT.) Oh, just a minute, dear.

OM. No, that's all right. There's nothing more to be said.

NN. I appreciate what you mean—yes I do. But it doesn't get me. And all I can do is to go after it as I see it. (*He goes into workroom.* ANN *stands looking at the frieze.*)

ILLICENT. (*Pulling Ann toward table.*) Mother—come here. Mother, *please.* Why—what I wanted to—sit down. (*Putting* ANN *into a chair above the long table.*) Every *one* of the girls are staying over tomorrow. It looks as if you were having such a slow time that you didn't have anything to do *but* go back to school if you don't stay. And I want—Why Fanny's going to have a party tomorrow night—just a little one, and I want to have eight of them to dinner first. (*Sitting at right end of table.*)

NN. Oh—

ILLICENT. Only eight. You see, Fanny's brother's home, too, and—you see it's—Everybody has dinners and things you know before they go to the dance, you know, and—will you, Mother? Can't I?

NN. But dearest you've done so much since you've been home. You can't get back to school too soon. New York is dreadful. It really is! The sensible mothers can't compete with the idiotic ones who let girls do all these silly things.

ILLICENT. Don't be foolish, Mother.

NN. And school does begin tomorrow. And they expect—

ILLICENT. They don't expect us to be back. All the really smart girls stay over. It's only the deadly slow ones who are there on time. Please, mother—*please.* There'll only be eight of us; and Fanny's done so much for me I think it's as little as I could do to have her brother to dinner. Don't you?

NN. Is he nice?

ILLICENT. Yes he is. He's older, you know and more fun. He got full dress clothes this Christmas—long tails, you know, and he looks perfectly—Mother, you're not listening. (ANN'S *eyes have gone back to the frieze again.*)

ANN. Yes, I am dear—Yes I am. Full dress clothes.

MILLICENT. Well—May I?

ANN. Dearest—I may be frightfully busy tomorrow. I may have to do the most important thing I've ever done in my life and if I do it would be awfully hard to have—

MILLICENT. Oh, now mother! Fanny's mother's had a party or something for her *every* single night. She took her to the Plaza to dance after the matinee today and I've never been to a hotel or any exciting place in my life. You try to keep me so young mother and, jiminy cricket, I'm sixteen.

ANN. Positively ancient.

MILLICENT. Well—sixteen's old enough for *any* thing. Will you mother—please—*please.* (*Kissing her mother's throat.*)

ANN. But what would I do if I had to do this other thing?

MILLICENT. What other thing? Can't it wait?

ANN. No it can't. That's just it. Your father may—I may be working with him all day tomorrow.

MILLICENT. You needn't have such a terribly *elaborate* dinner,—you know, but I'm crazy to do it. In fact I just have to. I've already asked most of them and they're dying to come.

ANN. You didn't, Kitten—how could you?

MILLICENT. But Mother, it's so *important*—and I don't see how I can get out of it now. You wouldn't want me to be compromised or anything, would you?

ANN. (*Laughing and kissing Millicent.*) You blessed baby—you ought to be spanked.

MILLICENT. You're an angel, mummie. You will—won't you? (*Putting her cheek against* ANN'S.)

ANN. What have you got in your ears?

MILLICENT. Earrings of course.

ANN. Heavens! Take them off.

MILLICENT. Oh, *mother!* All the girls wear them.

ANN. Take them off!

MILLICENT. But they have so much style.

ANN. Style your granny! Take them off or I'll bite 'em off. (MILLICENT *squirms and giggles as* ANN *bites her ears.*)

MILLICENT. Wait—wait. I will. I think you're mean to make me. You have such terribly strict ideas.

ANN. Your ears are much prettier than those things. Can't you understand

that nothing is so attractive as just being natural? Why cover up with stuff like that?

MILLICENT. You *are* funny! You'll stay at home and meet everybody tomorrow night, won't you? I want them to see you. You are sweet, mummy.

ANN. Do you love me a lot?

MILLICENT. Of course. (*Kissing* ANN.)

ANN. (*Rising suddenly and going to look at the frieze.*) Oh, I'm so unhappy.

MILLICENT. Why? What's the matter? I should think you'd be tickled to death if father's going to get all that money.

TOM. (*Coming in from the workroom quickly.*) You say— (*He stops seeing* MILLICENT.)

MILLICENT. Aren't you coming up, now to plan it all?

ANN. In a few—

TOM. Go on Millicent. (MILLICENT *skips out.*) Why didn't you speak the minute you saw it go wrong—or thought you did?

ANN. I was never *sure,* until today, dear.

TOM. I don't agree with you at all but still it isn't exactly inspiring—knowing you think I'm going to fail.

ANN. Tom—I'm sorry.

TOM. It's all right—but you know I care more what you think than anybody in the world and—I—it's sort of a knock-out.

ANN. I had to tell you the truth—when I *was* sure. I *had* to. Tom—listen—since you've been working at this an idea has come to me. At first I thought the idea was too big for me—that I never could carry it out—and then I said I won't *let* myself be afraid—and it's grown and grown night and day. Last night I finished it—down here—

TOM. The—

ANN. The drawings—I want you to look at them—and if—if you like it—if you think the idea is better than yours I want you to take it—use it, instead of yours.

TOM. Why Ann, you're not serious. (*She nods.*) Good heavens, child, you know—you know how tremendous this thing is as well as I do.

ANN. Yes I do! But I tell you my idea is big. Oh, I knew you'd look like that when I told you. You can't believe it of course—but Tom—. It's there—something vital and *alive*—with a strange charm in it. And I offer it to you dear—if you want it.

TOM. (*Taking her in his arms strongly and kissing her passionately.*) You generous darling! It's like you to do this. You dear—I love you for it.

ANN. (*Responding warmly to his love.*) I want you to have it. It's more than ever dared dream I could do.

TOM. But darling—you couldn't possibly do anything for a scheme as big as this.

ANN. Why do you take that for granted? Why do you say that—before you've even seen my sketches?

TOM. (*After a pause.*) Well—where are they?

ANN. (*Taking a key out of her pocket.*) In the lower drawer in my cupboard.

TOM. (*Taking the key.*) No, don't come with me.

ANN. But I—

TOM. I don't want you to explain anything. I want it to strike me fresh. But I'm going to hit hard—right from the shoulder. If it's good—all right. If it's bad—all right. And I expect you to take it like a man. (ANN *nods.* To *hurries into workroom as* RUTH *comes in from hall.*)

RUTH. Have you told him?

ANN. Yes—he's gone to look at my sketches now.

RUTH. Ann—I've been thinking. You're a fool to give away your ideas. Make your models and send them in yourself.

ANN. What?

RUTH. Certainly. Why not?

ANN. Oh, Ruth—I couldn't. Some day I will. Someday.

RUTH. Some day! You've got the biggest idea you've ever had. Do it—see it in—yourself—on your *own feet.*

ANN. Tom would think I was out of my—

RUTH. *You* know it's good—don't you?

ANN. *Yes, I do.*

RUTH. It belongs to *you*—and if you don't take care of it and give it a chance, you kill something which is more important than you are. Don't forget *that.* You're not just the talented woman, you've got *downright genius* and you ought to make everything give way to that. *Everything.* If you don't you're weak.

ANN. Wait and see what Tom says. He'll know. He's so dead right about my stuff—always.

RUTH. Oh, you lucky people! Pulling together. If Keith only had a little of it towards me. Ann, what *shall* I do

ANN. (*With quick sympathy.*) What, dear?

RUTH. He's never, never, never going to know what a sacrifice it will be for me to stop just as I'm getting what I've slaved and struggled for all these years. And I can't bear to hurt him.

ANN. Dear old Keith. He just *can't see.* And he loves you so.

KEITH. (*Coming in from hall.*) Why did you come back down here?

RUTH. Just to run away from—you. No, I didn't. (*Going to him sweetly.*) You know I didn't.

ANN. (*As* DAISY *comes in from hall.*) Daisy, tell me the minute Tom comes out.

KEITH. (*To* RUTH.) I'll be up in a minute. I've got to cover some stuff in there. (*Exit* ANN *and* RUTH.)

KEITH. You're a wonder, Daisy. You don't mind sitting up late to get your letters off, do you?

DAISY. Oh, no—I'm healthy.

KEATH. You're a peach. I'm sorry I made you huffy. All I meant was that no man would ever think he could ask you to marry him unless he had an awfully big bank-roll to offer.

(REMINGTON *comes in from hall to get his hat and stick—just in time to hear Keith's last remark.* DAISY *rises—consciously.* KEITH *goes into workroom.* REMINGTON *goes to end of table.*)

DAISY. I suppose that speech sounded rather queer. He was talking about Ruth, of course.

REMINGTON. Don't apologize or you'll make me suspicious.

DAISY. Now—

REMINGTON. It sounded very much as if he were making love to *you.*

DAISY. Oh—

REMINGTON. I wish to God he would. You'd—be a much better wife for him than the other one.

DAISY. You—

REMINGTON. You know you would. Why don't you go in and get him? Cut the other one out.

DAISY. How *dare* you say such a thing to me?

REMINGTON. Why shouldn't I say it?

DAISY. Because you have no *right* to. I haven't the slightest interest in Keith McKenzie—not the slightest.

REMINGTON. No. I can see that.

DAISY. What do you mean?

REMINGTON. (*Suddenly understanding.*) Why my dear girl, I didn't mean anything. I'm sorry.

DAISY. I don't know why in the world you said such a thing to me.

REMINGTON. Well—well—forget it.

DAISY. You don't think from anything I've ever done or said—

REMINGTON. I don't think anything—I don't know anything. . .

DAISY. I don't see *why* you said it.

ANN. (*Coming from hall.*) What's the matter?

(*As* DAISY *breaks away from* REMINGTON *who is holding her by the wrists.*)

DAISY. Let me go, please. I'm in a hurry. (DAISY *rushes out through hall.*)

ANN. What on earth are you doing to Daisy?

REMINGTON. She's doing things to me.

ANN. What?

REMINGTON. Convincing me of some of my old-fashioned ideas. (TOM *rushes in from the workroom with a large roll of drawings.*)

TOM. Ann—they're wonderful.

ANN. Oh—Tom!

TOM. (*Spreading the roll of sketches on the table*—ANN *helping him.*) Beautiful! Astoundingly beautiful! Well as I know you, I didn't think you had it in you.

ANN. I can't believe it. Are you going to use it.

TOM. Oh, my dear girl. That's different. Now don't be hurt. Why Ann—it isn't possible. You—you're mistaken—way off. I don't know what's got into you. This is imaginative and charming and graceful—full of abandon and fantasy and even vitality—but ye gods, child, it isn't in *this* class.

ANN. But you could strengthen it. It will grow. You'll see more in it. Really you will. Don't make up your mind yet.

REMINGTON. What are you talking about? What has she done?

TOM. Drawings for a frieze—like this. And they're amazing, doctor. Positively amazing.

REMINGTON. You don't say.

TOM. Wait—let's see what McKenzie says. McKenzie—

ANN. (*Pounding on the workroom door.*) Keith—Keith—come here—quickly.

REMINGTON. Looks beautiful to me, daughter. When did you do all this? Do you mean to say you didn't know anything about it, Tom?

TOM. Not a thing. She's been— (KEITH *comes in.*). Here McKenzie. Look at this. Here's a scheme Mrs. Herford's worked out. Begins here—See—see? Get it? What do you think?

KEITH. Mrs. Herford?

TOM. Yes. Do you get it?

MCKENZIE. Of course.

TOM. Well? What do you say?

KEITH. I say it's as beautiful as anything I ever saw.

TOM. Great! And what do you think of it for a big place like mine?

KEITH. For *that?*

TOM. Yes.

KEITH. Oh—I—too fanciful, isn't it? Would the crowd understand it? Needs a big clear striking thing like that. Don't you think?

TOM. Then you don't think it's as good as mine for this competition.

KEITH. As yours? Heavens no!

ANN. (*Standing at right—facing the three men.*) Then do you know what I'm going to do?

KEITH AND TOM. What?

ANN. Make my models and send them in myself.

TOM, KEITH AND REMINGTON. What?

ANN. Why not?

REMINGTON.. You don't mean it, daughter.

ANN. I do. I mean it with my whole soul.

REMINGTON. Why do you want to do anything so foolish?

ANN. Because I *made* it. Because it's my work. You all say it's good. Why shouldn't I send it? I don't mind failure. I only want it to stand its little chance with the rest. I love it. It means more to me than I can possibly —why shouldn't I? I *want* to.

TOM. Then do it. Why not? It's your own affair. Go ahead. (*Putting out the hand of a good pal-ship to her.*)

ANN. Oh, Tom—thank you. You're splendid.

(*The curtain falls.*)

ACT II

TIME: *Four months later—about nine in the evening. The living room in the Herford house.*

The room is long and wide, dignified and restful in proportions. At center back a large fireplace with a severe mantel in cream marble. A wide window covers the entire left wall, and wide doors at right lead into the library. A single door at back, left of fireplace, leads into hall. The walls are hung in a soft dull silk which throws out the strong simple lines of the woodwork. A bright wood fire is burning and soft lights throw a warm glow over the gray carpet and the furniture which is distinguished and artistic but distinctly comfortable, giving the room the air of being much lived in and used.

AT CURTAIN: *The room is empty a moment.* DAISY *is singing in the library at right.* ELLEN, *a maid, middle-aged and kindly, comes from hall carrying a silver coffee service.*

DAISY. (*As she comes in from library.*) Here's your coffee, girls. Come in here. Put the flowers over there, Ellen.

(ELLEN *moves the vase of flowers and makes room for the coffee service on table right center.* RUTH *comes in from the library with a book.* ELLEN *goes to fire and pokes it; then straightens the writing things on the desk.*)

DAISY. Ann, here's your coffee.

ANN. (*Calling from library.*) I don't want any, thank you. What time is it, Daisy?

DAISY. About nine. Why?

ANN. Oh, the postman. I'm waiting for the last mail.

DAISY. Well, don't. A watched pot you know. (*To* RUTH.) She's watched every mail for a week. I almost think Ann will be more disappointed than Tom himself if he doesn't get the commission. (*They take their coffee to the fire.*)

RUTH. I hope to goodness he does. Everybody's so dead sure of him.

DAISY. Almost too sure. I'm beginning to be frightened myself. The time's about up.

ANN. (*Hurrying in from the library.*) That's the postman—isn't it?

ELLEN. No ma'am. Beggin' your pardon. It ain't—I'm listenin' too.

ANN. Are you, Ellen? Keep on and bring it up the minute it comes.

ELLEN. Faith I will. I've got the habit meself lately of watchin' for the mail.

ANN. Have you?

ELLEN. Every time I hear the whistle I drop whatever I'm doin' like it was hot —and run.

ANN. Do you?

ELLEN. And just before I open the door I say—The Holy Saints be praised, I hope it's come this time—whatever it is they're lookin' fer. (*She goes out through the hall.*)

ANN. Oh, dear! It gets worse as the time grows shorter.

DAISY. Ann, working yourself up like this won't make Tom get the commission. Stop thinking about it.

ANN. But I can't, Daisy Dimple. He ought to hear tonight if he's ever going to.

DAISY. Well, I'll be glad when it's all over and we know one way or the other —and can settle down to ordinary life again. It's almost given me nervous indigestion.

ANN. Listen! There's the postman.

RUTH. (*Jumping so that her cup and saucer almost fall.*) Oh, Ann, you're getting me so excited, I'll listen for the postman all the rest of my life.

ANN. I know I shall. Oh, Tom must get it. He *must*. If he does, I'll wire Millicent. (*Taking up a picture of Millicent which stands in a frame on the table.*) I think I'll run up to school Sunday just to give her a good hug. I get so hungry for her!

RUTH. Isn't it splendid the school is so really what it ought to be?

ANN. Yes. So much that's sweet and right that one can't get in New York for a girl.

DAISY. (*Sewing on a frock which is nearly finished.*) She seems pretty keen about it herself.

ANN. Yes—rather. Easter vacation when I was working day and night to get my models off, she was perfectly contented to stay at school.

RUTH. She's an adorable kiddie but I don't envy you your job.

ANN. Why?

RUTH. I think being a mother is the most gigantic, difficult, important and thankless thing in the world.

DAISY. That's the most sensible remark I ever heard you give vent to, Ruth.

ANN. There's something much more glorious in it than being thanked. You'll miss the most wonderful thing in the world, Ruth, if you don't have children.

RUTH. I know. I know. But work has taken that all out of me. It does, you know. It would bore me stiff to take care of a baby.

DAISY. That's a pleasant prospect for Keith. Do you expect *him* to do it?

RUTH. (*Making herself comfortable on the couch.*) I'm not going to *have* children.

ANN. (*Going to sit at the fire.*) That's perfectly fair if he knows it. No reason why you should if you don't want 'em.

DAISY. Well, I think it's a *rotten* way to live.

RUTH. Wait till you decide to marry somebody yourself, young lady, and see how *you* like giving up everything that interests you most.

DAISY. Well, by Jove, if I ever *do* marry, I'll *marry* and do all the things that belong to my side of the game. No halfway business for me. You might as well be a man's mistress and be done with it.

RUTH. (*Half serious — half joking.*) That's the ideal relationship for a man and woman. Each to keep his independence in absolutely every way—and live together merely because they charm each other. But somehow we don't seem to be able to make it respectable.

DAISY. I suppose that's very clever and modern.

RUTH. Oh, no—it's as old as the everlasting hills. The trouble is children are apt to set in and mess things up. It's hard on *them*.

DAISY. So far as I can see most everything that's modern is hard on children.

ANN. (*Laughing.*) How's the gown getting on, Daisy?

DAISY. Most finished.

RUTH. That's awfully pretty.

ANN. Slip it on so we can see.

DAISY. Oh, I can't.

ANN. (*Rising and walking to* DAISY.) Yes, you can—over that one—just to give us an idea.

DAISY. I'll look a tub and it really makes me quite respectably straight up and down.

ANN. You're a perfectly scrumptious size and shape. Isn't she, Ruth?

RUTH. Magnificent!

DAISY. Yes, Ruth, skinny women always enthuse over their fat friends.

RUTH. (*Rising and goes to* DAISY.) Oh, you aren't fat, Daisy. That is, not too fat. How does this go. It's terribly complicated, isn't it?

DAISY. No—perfectly simple. Wait—this goes over here.

ANN. No, it doesn't, does it?

DAISY. Yes, it does. Right there. Don't you see? The style of the whole gown depends on that.

RUTH. You must have it on wrong side before.

DAISY. Nonsense! Can't you see, Ann? It's as simple as can be.

ANN. Yes, I know dear—but does this go on the shoulder—or down on your hip? (*They all talk at once for a moment on the subject of where the end of the girdle fastens.*) Oh, here! I see, of course! There!

DAISY. Now, does it make me look big?

RUTH. You want to look big, don't you?

DAISY. Well, I want to look life size. Don't you see how much better I am through here than I was last year, Ann? (*Touching her hip.*)

ANN. Much. The female form divine is improving all the time anyway—gradually getting back to what it was in the beginning.

DAISY. I don't expect to look like you in it, Ruth.

RUTH. Oh, don't you, dear? Then why don't you have it stick out this way as much as possible so everybody will know you *mean* to look broad? There's everything in that, you know.

DAISY. I think it would be awfully good on you—to fill out what you haven't got. Then everybody would know you didn't *mean* to look so narrow—even if you *are*.

ANN. You're both delightful. Perfect specimens of your types. When I look at Ruth I think the most alluring charm a woman can have is beautiful bones without a superfluous ounce of flesh on them. And when I look at you, Daisy, I think after all, there's nothing so stunning as a big strong girl with perfectly natural lines—so natural that we know she'd be even better looking with no clothes on at all.

DAISY. Heavens, Ann! Your sculptor's eye is a little embarrassing.

RUTH. Evidently you think my clothes help me out a good deal. But at least I'm free and comfortable, too. Can you touch the floor, Daisy?

DAISY. Of course. (*The two women bend—touching the floor with the tips of their fingers.*)

(TOM, REMINGTON *and* KEITH *come in from the hall.*)

TOM. What's going on?

REMINGTON. What are you trying to do, Ruth—swim or fly?

ANN. We're just saying that the waist measure expands as we *broaden* in our ideas.

KEITH. Is that the fashion now?

RUTH. Yes—broad and free.

REMINGTON. That's *one* thing you women have to acknowledge men have more sense about than you have.

ANN, RUTH, DAISY. What?

REMINGTON. Our figures. We've had the same shape since the Garden of Eden and you've had hundreds of absolutely different kinds.

ANN. Turn around, Daisy, I want to try something. (*She accidentally sticks a pin into* DAISY'S *shoulder.*)

DAISY. Ouch!

ANN. Oh, I'm sorry! You seem to be so close to your clothes.

REMINGTON. What are you doing to her?

DAISY. She's sticking pins into me.

ANN. For her own good. Isn't that pretty?

TOM. What?

ANN. The frock.

TOM. Is that new?

KEITH. Which?

DAISY. Do you mean to say you don't realize I have on something different from what I wore at dinner?

RUTH. No use dressing for Keith. He never sees anything.

DAISY. I'm going to undress now. Perhaps that will interest you more. (ANN *begins to unfasten the gown.*)

REMINGTON. Much more.

ANN. Was *that* the postman?

DAISY. No, it was *not*.

REMINGTON. The postman habit is getting on my nerves. You're all jumping and listening till you'll have St. Vitus dance if you don't stop.

ANN. How can we help it?

REMINGTON. After all, a few other competitions have been lost and won—and people have lived through it. It's not the only thing in life.

OM. You'd think it was if you had $100,000 at stake. (ELLEN *comes in from hall and takes out the coffee tray.*)

NN. Aren't we going to have some bridge? Who wants to play? I know you do, daddy.

EMINGTON. I have to get even with you for that last rubber, Tom.

OM. You can't do it.

AISY. I want to play, with you, doctor.

EMINGTON. Come on.

UTH. I'm afraid to play *against* you.

EMINGTON. (*Turning at the library door.*) What's that?

THERS. What?

EMINGTON. The postman!

THERS. Oh! RUTH *and* DAISY *go into library R. with* REMINGTON.)

NN. (*To* TOM *and* KEITH.) Coming?

OM. You go, Keith. I want to look at the paper a minute.

ITH. Oh, my game's no good. You go.

NN. Now don't stay out here and listen and wait. If there is any mail Ellen will bring it straight up.

OM. I won't. I'll be with you—in two minutes.

NN. Anyway—tonight doesn't necessarily decide it. There may be still two or three more days. Isn't that so, Keith?

ITH. Yes, I think so.

EMINGTON, RUTH, DAISY. (*Calling from the library.*) Come on. Come on.

NN. Coming. (*She goes in.*)

ITH. That's straight. I do think so—(*A pause.* TOM *reads.*) Don't you?

OM. I'm trying to—but these last few days of waiting have been—

ITH. Don't lose your nerve, Herford. I'm just as sure as I was the first day. If by any wild chance you *don't* get it—it will be a fluke.

OM. Oh, no. Oh, no, not by any means. The men judging this *know*. I'd trust them with anything. The fellows who lose will have no kick coming on that score.

ITH. Well—I don't see how you *can* lose.

OM. A man's a fool to let himself count on an uncertainty. I don't mean that I've lost sight of the fact that I might lose—not for a second—but I confess—as the time has grown shorter I've realized I *want* it even more than I thought I did.

ITH. Of course you want it. Aside from the glory—it's an *awful lot of money*—governor, an awful lot of money.

OM. *It is.* It would put us straight—clear up the house entirely and make it possible to do only the things a fellow wants to do. That's what I'm after. Then—No more competitions for me, thank you. Is that the 'phone? I'm as bad as Ann—jumping and listening. Damn it! I want to *know*—one way or the other.

ITH. Of course you do. The cursed waiting is enough to make you cut your throat.

LEN. (*Opening the hall door.*) The telephone for Mr. Herford.

OM. Who is it?

LEN. I couldn't just get the name, sir.

ITH. Want me to go?

OM. If you don't mind, old man. (ELLEN *goes out.*)

ITH. (*Starting to the door and turning.*) It couldn't be—you wouldn't get word that way—would you?

OM. Uh?—Oh—nonsense! No—no—nonsense! I'll go—No, I—you go—old man. That's not it—of course. (TOM *listens a moment—showing a tense anxiety.*)

UTH. (*Coming in from the library.*) They're waiting for you, Tom. The cards are dealt. Where's Keith?

OM. He'll be back in a minute.

UTH. Aren't you going in?

OM. Why don't you take my place? I don't feel a bit—

UTH. I did offer to but Dr. Remington said he would like to *play* bridge this evening, not *teach* it. Wouldn't it be seventh heaven to speak the truth on all occasions as unconcernedly as Dr. Remington does? Imagine the sheer bliss of letting go and spitting it all out. Have you ever counted the lies you told in just one day, Tom?

OM. No—I've never had time. (TOM *starts to go into the library and turns to see if* RUTH *is coming.*)

UTH. No—I'm going to wait for Keith. TOM *goes in—Ruth reads for a moment.*)

ITH. (*Coming back from the hall.*) That was—

UTH. What?

ITH. Millicent or her school or something. Such a bad connection; they're going to call again in a few minutes. Is that dress new, dear?

UTH. I've had it three years.

KEITH. It's awfully pretty. I wish you'd wear it all the time.

RUTH. I do.

KEITH. Aren't we going in to play?

RUTH. No, I don't feel like it. Come and sit down, dear. Oh, are you going to sit way over there?

KEITH. Not 'specially. (*Drawing chair near the couch*—KEITH *sits facing* RUTH.)

RUTH. Comfortable?

KEITH. Not very.

RUTH. Have you read this?

KEITH. No. Any good.

RUTH. Yes—Good enough. (*She rises, going to the fireplace.*)

KEITH. What's the matter? I thought you wanted to talk. Where are you going?

RUTH. No place.

KEITH. You got the fidgets too?

RUTH. Sort of.

KEITH. Well, stop it. Herford's going to be all right. There'll be news in a day or so now.

RUTH. I wasn't thinking of that. I have something to tell you.

KEITH. Then why don't you come and tell it?

RUTH. And if you aren't fine about it—it will be the greatest disappointment in my whole life.

(*Going to* KEITH *and putting a hand on his shoulder.*)

KEITH. You mean if I don't think just what you want me to about it. Go on. I s'pose I know, anyway.

RUTH. Then if you do—but you don't. It's so wonderful you couldn't guess. And you'll just *have* to see it the right way, because if you don't it would mean you're what I know you're *not*. Down in your real soul, Keith, you're generour and fair and right.

KEITH. Suppose you communicate it to me first and discuss my soul afterwards.

RUTH. (*Sitting on couch facing* KEITH.) Well—Oh you *will* be sweet won't you, Keithie?

KEITH. I can see it's going to be something *very* pleasant for *me*.

RUTH. It is if you . . .

KEITH. It's wonderful if I'm not a fool and a pig. Yes, I know. Go on. Go on.

RUTH. Now don't begin that way—please dear. Don't shut up your mind before I even tell you.

KEITH. Suppose you *do* tell me.

RUTH. Well— last week there was a ro in the office over a matter concernin the policy of the magazine and I dif fered with all the men in my depar ment. At last I was sent for by th Editor in Chief. He was terribly se vere at first, and I was frightened t pieces—but I stuck to my guns—an bless your soul he sent for me agai today and said they had had a meetin of the directors and that they decided— oh, it's too—

KEITH. What? What?

RUTH. They had decided to make m Editor of the Woman's Magazin (*Fighting back her tears.*) Isn't i funny?

KEITH. And I suppose all this introduc tion means you accepted—without eve asking me?

RUTH. Why, of course. Oh, Keith don't you understand what this mean to me?

KEITH. I understand that unless i means more to you than I do—yo wouldn't hesitate a minute to chuck i

RUTH. It's hopeless—we'll never—neve see it the same way.

KEITH. You've never made the slightes effort to see it *my* way.

RUTH. What you ask of me is to cu off one half of my life and throw away. What I ask of you is only a experiment—to let me try and see if can't make things comfortable an smooth and happy for us—and sti take this big thing that has come as result of all my years of hard wor and fighting for it.

KEITH. You'll never stop if you don now. Once you get deeper in it you be swamped—eaten up by it.

RUTH. Don't, Keith. I can't bear i It's too unutterably selfish.

KEITH. (*Rising and pushing his cha away.*) All right—I'm selfish—but I' human—and I'll bet my hat I'm ju like every nine men out of ten. Wha in the name of heaven does loving girl amount to if you don't want to tak care of her from start to finish? man's no good if he doesn't feel th way, I tell you. He's a pup—and oug to be shot.

RUTH. (*Rising.*) But what about *me* and what I want and have to have in order to be happy?

KEITH. That's it. That is the point. You won't be happy without it. You want the excitement of it—that hustle and bustle outside.

RUTH. I want it just as you want your work—and you haven't any more right to ask me to give up mine than I have to ask you to stop *yours*.

KEITH. You simply don't *love* me.

RUTH. What rot! What nonsense!

KEITH. You don't love me.

RUTH. It's hopeless. You've decided then. You won't compromise—so we'll end it.

KEITH What do you mean?

RUTH. (*Going to the hall door.*) You've made your own choice. We'll end it now.

KEITH. (*Following her.*) No—Ruth—I won't give you up.

RUTH. You have. You have given me up.

KEITH. Ruth—wait.

RUTH. It's best, Keith. Don't hate me. You'll see it's best in a little while. We'll learn to be friends. I want you to be happy, dear boy—I do. And I couldn't make you so. We'll end it now. It's the best for us both.

KEITH. Ruth—

(*She goes out quickly, closing the door.* KEITH *turns to the fire.*)

DAISY. (*Knocking and opening the library door.*) Excuse me. May I come in to get my sewing? Where's Ruth?

KEITH. (*With his back to* DAISY.) Don't know.

DAISY. Well, don't bite my head off. I can always tell when you and Ruth have been discussing the *emancipation* of women.

(*Sitting below table and taking her dress to sew.*)

KEITH. You *all* think you're superior beings.

DAISY. Of course.

KEITH. (*Beginning to walk about.*) Yes, you do. You're just as bad as the rest of them—worse. The minute a woman makes enough to buy the clothes on her back, she thinks she and God Almighty are running the earth and men are just little insects crawling around. (DAISY *laughs.*) Oh, you can laugh. It's so—and you *know* it. Every one of you that have got the bee in your bonnet of doing something—*doing* something, are through with the men. Look at *you*. *You've* cut men out entirely and you think you're too smart to marry one. Now, don't you? Isn't that the reason?

DAISY. (*Threading her needle.*) Don't bully-rag me. Say it all to Ruth.

KEITH. I tell you it's all rot—business for women. It spoils every one of you. Why aren't *you* in a home of your own instead of hustling for your bread and butter? It's because you're too damned conceited. You think you know more than any man you ever saw and you think you don't need one. You wait—You'll see—some day.

(*Going back to the fire.*)

DAISY. You amuse me.

KEITH. There you *are*—that's about what I'm for.

DAISY. There's a button off your coat. Looks horrid.

KEITH. I know. I've got it.

(*Putting his finger in waistcoat pocket.*)

DAISY. Have you got it there? (KEITH *shows her the button.*) Come here, I'll do it.

KEITH. Never mind. I'll *nail* it on.

DAISY. Come here. (KEITH *goes slowly to her.*) You'll have to take your coat off. It's bad luck to sew anything *on* you.

KEITH. Oh—

DAISY. Go on—take it off. (KEITH *takes off his coat reluctantly and watches* DAISY *as she examines the coat.*) Good Gracious, the lining's ripped, too.

KEITH. Yes.

DAISY. Poor old fellow! Are these some of your stitches?

KEITH. (*Drawing the chair from C. and sitting L. before* DAISY.) What's the matter with 'em?

DAISY. Looks like carpet thread. (*Snipping some threads.*) See, I'll just draw this together and that'll be all right.

(*She begins to sing an old ditty—Keith gradually hums with her, keeping time with his hands and feet and relaxing into a good humor.*)

KEITH. (*Soothed for a moment.*) How does it happen you're so handy with a needle? I thought you were all for business.

DAISY. Well, I can sew a button on if *you can.*

KEITH. I tell you it changes all women —business. They make a little money themselves and want luxury and won't live without it.

DAISY. Sometimes—yes. But there are lots and lots and lots of women taking care of themselves—putting up the bluff of being independent and happy who would be so glad to live in a little flat and do their own work—just to be the nicest thing in the world to some man.

KEITH. Wouldn't you think that Ruth would like that better than the office?

DAISY. No—not the lamp light and the needle for Ruth. Keith, don't ask her to give up her work—don't you see, she's more clever, in her way than you are in yours. She'll go further, and if you make her stop, she'll hate you some day because she'll think you've kept her back. That's a hard thing to say—but it's the truth.

KEITH. You mean I'm a failure.

DAISY. (*Genuinely.*) No—no—I don't mean that, Keith.

KEITH. I work—Gosh, how I work, but I'll never *do* anything. Why haven't I got what Mrs. Herford's got? She sent models off for this frieze that any *man* would be proud to send. Why couldn't I?

DAISY. Seems kind of mixed up and unfair—doesn't it?

KEITH. You bet it's unfair. I work like a dog and never get anywhere. If Ruth throws me over, I'll never have the home I'm working for. That's what I want —a home. I'll never have it now.

DAISY. Oh, yes you will.

KEITH. I'm done for.

DAISY. No, you're not. There are too many women in the world—who—could —love you.

KEITH. I'm no good.

DAISY. Some woman might think that you—your—the way you work—and your honesty and *loyalty* are the greatest things a man can have.

KEITH. Um!

DAISY. *Some* woman might use all her cleverness and ingenuity to make the little flat beautiful—to show you what your own home—could be—to give you a better dinner than you thought you could afford.

KEITH. (*Sitting with his head in h hands.*) That kind of a woman is thing of the past.

DAISY. Oh no, they're not. They're ly ing around *thick*. The trouble is— *woman* can't *ask*. Even if a man is just at her hand—and she knows sh could make him happy—she can't te him—she can't open his eyes—she ha to hide what might make things righ for both of them. Because she's woman.

KEITH. Oh—love doesn't cut much ic with a woman. Women are all *brai* nowadays.

DAISY. (*With sudden warmth.*) That enough to use all the brains a woman got—to make a home—to bring up chi dren—and to keep a man's love.

KEITH. (*Raising his head slowly an looking at Daisy.*) I never expecte to hear *you* say a thing like tha There's some excuse for *you* being i business.

DAISY. Yes, of course. (*Rising an holding the coat.*) I'm not the mar rying kind.

KEITH. (*Getting into the coat.*) Muc obliged. Would *you* be willing to giv up work and marry a man on a sma salary—if you loved him?

DAISY. You make me laugh.

KEITH. What's the matter, Daisy?

DAISY. Nothing.

KEITH. I never saw tears in your eye before. Women are funny things.

DAISY. Yes, we're funny. There's onl one thing on earth funnier.

KEITH. What?

DAISY. Men.

REMINGTON. (*Coming in from the li brary.*) Did I leave my other glasse in here?

DAISY. (*Beginning to look for them.* I haven't seen them.

REMINGTON. I've lost one game becaus I didn't have 'em and I don't propos to give 'em another.

DAISY. What a shame! Help look fo them, Keith.

REMINGTON. I'm pretty blind—but than God not quite as bad as you, Keith.

KEITH. What? There's nothing th matter with my eyes.

REMINGTON. (*Looking insinuatingly* DAISY.) Don't you think there i Daisy?

DAISY. (*Trying to look unconscious.*) Are you *sure* you left those glasses in here?

REMINGTON. It's as bad a case of short sightedness as I ever saw.

DAISY. Oh—

(*The doctor holds her and turns her, pushing her toward* KEITH.)

REMINGTON. Daisy, don't you see that queer blind look in his eyes?

DAISY. No—I don't.

KEITH. What do you mean? (REMINGTON *laughs.*) Do you see the joke, Daisy?

REMINGTON. It's no joke—is it Daisy?

DAISY. I don't know what on earth you're talking about. I'm going to get those glasses. (*Going to hall door.*) You probably left them in your boat in the call. I mean in your hall in the coat —I mean—

REMINGTON. That's all right, Daisy—we know what you mean. At least I do.

DAISY. Oh you— (ELLEN *comes in from hall.*) What is it, Ellen?

ELLEN. The telephone, Miss Herford.

DAISY. For me?

ELLEN. They said any one of the family.

DAISY. I'll go.

(*She goes out followed by* ELLEN.)

REMINGTON. *There's* a woman who knows how to take care of a man.

KEITH. I'm afraid that's not her object in life. They all have something else to do.

REMINGTON. What's the matter with you?

KEITH. I'm done for.

REMINGTON. Ruth, you mean?

KEITH. She won't marry me unless she goes on working.

REMINGTON. She's right, too.

KEITH. What?

REMINGTON. Of course. You haven't any more right to ask that clever little woman to throw away half her life and to be the tail to your kite than you have to ask her to cut her throat. Open your eyes and look around. There are always other women.

KEITH. *Never.* Never in the world for me.

REMINGTON. I give you about three months.

KEITH. Do you think I could ever—

REMINGTON. Certainly I do. Look at Daisy, for instance. A fine, sweet wholesome girl with no kinks and no abnormal ambitions.

KEITH. Daisy?

REMINGTON. Don't blow your brains out for a couple of days. Talk it over with her. She thinks you're about the finest thing going.

KEITH. *What?*

REMINGTON. Fact! Don't try to hold on to the woman who's getting away from you, but take the one who is coming your way.

KEITH. You're crazy. Mad as a hatter. What are you giving me?

REMINGTON. Just a little professional advice—*free.* She's head over heels in love with you, I tell you.

DAISY. (*Coming in from hall in great excitement. She has a case for glasses in her hand.*) Dr. Remington, that was long distance. They telephoned from school that Millicent has gone.

KEITH. Gone?

REMINGTON. Gone where?

DAISY. Left school suddenly tonight without saying a word to anyone.

REMINGTON and KEITH. What?

DAISY. As soon as they knew—they 'phoned the station, and found she had taken the train for New York.

REMINGTON. What train?

DAISY. The one that gets here at nine o'clock.

KEITH. (*Looking at his watch.*) It's 9:15 now.

DAISY. Shall I tell Ann?

REMINGTON. No—no—wait. We'll give her fifteen minutes more to get to the house. No use frightening Ann.

KEITH. Do you think she *is* coming home?

DAISY. Why do you say that, Keith? What put such an idea into your head?

KEITH. Why wouldn't she say so—wire or write or something?

DAISY. Oh, it's too horrible. Doctor, oughtn't we to tell them now?

REMINGTON. No—no—

DAISY. But we're wasting time. What if she *shouldn't* come?

KEITH. I think I'll dash down to the station anyway. The train might be late.

REMINGTON. No—no. They'd ask where you'd gone. Wait fifteen minutes—I think she'll be here. I don't want to frighten—

(ANNE *comes in from the library.*)

ANNE. Well, I never saw people so wildly keen about playing as you are. What's the matter with you?

REMINGTON. I've been waiting all this time—for my glasses. Come on Daisy.

(*Taking the glasses from* DAISY, *he goes into library.*)

ANN. You look worried, Daisy.

DAISY. No—I'm only—

ELLEN. (*Coming in from hall with eight letters on a small tray.*) The mail, Mrs. Herford.

ANN. Oh! (*She snatches the letters, taking off the three top ones.*). It's come! Tom's letter.

KEITH and DAISY. What?

(ELLEN *goes out through hall L. C.*)

ANN. It is! It is—as true as I live.

KEITH. Great Scott!

DAISY. Then he's got it. He's got it.

ANN. Sh! Ask him to come here.

DAISY. It's too good to be true. It's too good!

(DAISY *goes into the library.*)

KEITH. I can't tell you how glad I am, Mrs. Herford. I can't tell you.

ANN. (*Scarcely able to speak.*) Ask him to come here.

KEITH. (*Going into library.*) Mrs. Herford wants you, Governor.

TOM. (*Within.*) Come and play, Ann.

ANN. (*Throwing the other letters on the table.*) Come here just a minute, Tom, please.

TOM. (*Coming to door.*) What is it?

ANN. Shut the door. It's come. (*Showing the letter. Tom opens and reads it. A look of sickening disappointment comes into his face.*) No? Oh, Tom!

TOM. I was their *second* choice!

ANN. Oh, Tom, don't take it like that. What difference does it make after all? You know you did a big thing. It's all luck—anyway.

TOM. I'll pull up in a minute. Well, it means taking hold of something else pretty quick. Going at it again.

ANN. Yes, keeping at it—that's it. What a TERRIBLE lot chance has to do with it.

TOM. Oh no, that isn't it.

ANN. Yes, it is, too.

TOM. No—I failed. I didn't get it, that's all.

ANN. You'll do something greater—next time—because of this.

TOM. (*Taking her hand.*) You're a brick! Now, see here, don't you be cut up about this. It's not the end of everything, you know. Stop that! You're not crying, I hope?

ANN. No, I'm not. Of course, I'm not! (*With passionate tenderness.*) Oh, my boy. I never loved you so much—never believed in you as I do now. This is only a little hard place that will make you all the stronger.

TOM. Dear old girl! What would I do without you? I'll tell the others and get it over. (*Rising, he stops, staring at one of the letters on the table.*) Ann!

ANN. Um?

TOM. (*Taking up a letter.*) Ann—here's one for you, too.

ANN. What? (*She tears open the letter.*) Tom! They've given the commission to me! Look! Read it! Is that what it says? Is it? Now aren't you glad you let me do it? You haven't lost! We've got it. Say you're glad. Say you're proud of me, dear. That's the best part of it all.

TOM. Of course, I am, dear, of course I am.

ANN. Oh, Tom, I wanted you to get it more than I ever wanted anything in my life, but this is SOMETHING to be thankful for. Doesn't this almost make it right?

TOM. Yes, dear, yes. Don't think of me. That's over—that part of it. Tell the others now.

ANN. Wait!

TOM. Aren't you going to?

ANN. I only want to be sure that you're just as happy that *I* won, as I would have been if YOU had.

TOM. Of course, I am. You know that.

(*Kissing her.*)

ANN. Tell the others, then, Tom—I can't.

TOM. (*Opening the library doors.*) What do you think has happened?

DAISY. (*Rushing in.*) Tom got it. Didn't you, Tom? You did. You did! Oh, I'm so glad. (*She kisses him.*)

KEITH. (*Following* DAISY *in.*) Well—governor—what did I tell you?

REMINGTON. (*In doorway.*) Pretty fine—isn't it?

ANN. You tell them, Tom.

TOM. Ann got it!

DAISY. What?

TOM. Isn't it great?

ANN. You won't believe it. But you can see the letter. Now, father, don't you think getting that is better than being nursemaid and housekeeper? Now, don't you, honestly?

REMINGTON. I do not.
ANN. What?
REMINGTON. I do not.
ANN. Oh, I can laugh at your theories now. You haven't a leg to stand on. Has he, Tom? Be a dear father and say you're glad.
REMINGTON. I'm not. I'd rather you'd failed a thousand times over—for your own good. What are you going to do with Millicent while you're making this thing?
ANN. How can you be so hard and narrow, Father?
REMINGTON. What if you did win? You've got something far greater than making statues to do.
TOM. Doctor, you're excited.
REMINGTON. Not a bit. I'm only telling the truth. This is your *business* you know—and it would have been far better for *both* of you if *you'd won the thing.*
TOM. I don't see the argument. Ann got it because she sent in a better model than I did. I don't see that anything else has anything to do with the case.

(*Tom goes out through hall.*)

ANN. (*Turning to sit on the couch.*) At least *Tom's* glad I got it.
REMINGTON. He's stung to the quick. You've humiliated him in his own eyes (*He goes to the fireplace.*)
ANN. I *can't* understand why you feel this way about it, father.
DAISY. Oh, its *natural* enough.
ANN. (*Turning to* DAISY *in amazement.*) Aren't *you* glad for me—Daisy?
DAISY. Yes, but—I—I'm awfully sorry for Tom.

(*She goes out through hall.*)

ANN. What's the matter with them all, Keith?
KEITH. Oh—as Daisy says—it's natural, Mrs. Herford.

(*He goes out after* DAISY.)

REMINGTON. (*Coming down to* ANN.) Daughter, I'm afraid I was a little too stiff just now. I didn't mean to be unkind.
ANN. (*Rising and starting to hall door.*) Oh, it doesn't matter.
REMINGTON. (*Stopping her.*) Yes, it does matter. I wouldn't hurt you for the world.
ANN. But you've *always* fought me, Father. You've *never* thought I had any right to work—never believed in my ability, now that I've proved I have some— Why can't you acknowledge it?
REMINGTON. Ann, this is a dangerous moment in your life. Tom's beaten—humiliated—knocked out. You did it—he can't stand it.
ANN. What have I done? Tom has a big nature. He's not little and petty enough to be hurt because I won.
REMINGTON. You're *blind.* He's had a blow tonight that no man on earth could stand.
ANN. Not Tom. I won't believe it.
REMINGTON. Yes, I say. I know what I'm talking about. Ann, be careful how you move now. Use your woman's tact, your love. Make Tom know that he is the greatest thing in the world to you—that you'd even give up all this work idea—if—he wanted—you to.
ANN. *What?* Tom wouldn't let me.
REMINGTON. Ask him. Ask him. See what he'd say.
ANN. Why, I wouldn't insult him. He'd think I thought he was—

(TOM *comes in from the hall*—ANN *checks herself and turns away quickly to fire.*)

TOM. (*After a pause.*) What's the matter?
REMINGTON. Nothing — nothing. Ann and I were just having a little argument as usual. I'll be back in a few minutes.

(*Looking at his watch he goes into hall.*)

TOM. (*Going slowly to* ANN.) I hope you're not still fighting about the—your frieze?
ANN. They're all so funny, Tom—the way they act about it. It hurts. But so long as you're glad, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. Say you're glad, dear. I want you to be as happy as I would be if you had won.
TOM. You know I am, dear. You know that.
ANN. (*With a sigh of relief* ANN *sits at left of fire.*) Think how I'll have to work. I can't even go to the country in the summer.
TOM. (*Sitting opposite* ANN *at the fire.*) And what will you do with Millicent this summer?

ANN. Oh, there are lots of nice things for her to do. The money! Think what it will mean to you!

TOM. Let me tell you one thing, Ann, in the beginning. I'll never touch a penny of the money.

ANN. What?

TOM. Not a cent of it.

ANN. What are you talking about?

TOM. That's your money. Put it away for yourself.

ANN. I never heard you say anything so absolutely unreasonable before in my life.

TOM. If you think I'm unreasonable, all right. But that's understood about the money. We won't discuss it.

ANN. Well, we *will* discuss it. Why shouldn't you use my money as well as I yours?

TOM. That's about as different as day and night.

ANN. Why is it?

TOM. Because I'm taking care of *you*. It's all right if you never do another day's work in your life. You're doing it because you want to, I'm doing it because I've got to. If you were alone it would be a different thing. But I'm here, and so long as I am I'll make what keeps us going.

ANN. But I'll help you.

TOM. No, you won't.

ANN. I *will*. I'm going on just as far as I have ability to go, and if you refuse to take any money I may make—if you refuse to use it for our mutual good, you're unjust and taking an unfair advan—— Oh, Tom! what are we saying? We're out of our senses—both of us. You didn't mean what you said. Did you? It would—— I simply couldn't bear it if you did. You didn't—did you?

TOM. I did— of course.

ANN. Tom—after all these years of pulling together, now that I've *done* something, why do you suddenly balk?

TOM. (*Rising.*) Good Heavens! Do you think I'm going to use your money? Don't try to run my end of it. It's the same old story—when you come down to it, a woman can't mix up in a man's business. (*He moves away.*)

ANN. Mix up in it? Isn't it a good thing for you that I got this commission?

TOM. No. I don't know that it's a good thing from any standpoint to have it known that I failed, but my wife succeeded.

ANN. I thought you said you were glad —proud of me.

TOM. It's too — distracting—too — takes you away from more important things.

ANN. What things?

TOM. Millicent and me.

ANN. Oh, Tom—— don't. You know that you and Millicent come before everything on earth to me.

TOM. No.

ANN. You do.

TOM. We don't—now. Your ambition comes first.

ANN. (*She rises, going to him.*) Tom, I worship you. You know that, don't you?

TOM. I'm beginning to hate this work and everything in connection with it.

ANN. But you taught me—helped me—pushed me on. What's changed you?

TOM. I let you do it in the first place because I thought it was right. I wanted you to do the thing you wanted to do.

ANN. Well?

TOM. I was a fool. I didn't see what it would lead to. It's taking you away from everything else—and there'll be no end to it. Your ambition will carry you away till the home and Millicent and I are nothing to you!

ANN. Tom—look at me. Be honest. Are you sorry—— *sorry* I got this commission?

TOM. I'm sorry it's the most important thing in the world to you.

ANN. Oh! Why do you say that to me? How can you?

TOM. Haven't I just seen it? You're getting rid of Millicent now because you don't want her to interfere with your work.

ANN. No!

TOM. You're pushing her out of your life.

ANN. No!

TOM. You said just now you were going to send her away alone in the summer. I don't like that. She's got to be with you—I want you to keep her with you.

ANN. But that's impossible. You know that. If I stop work now I might as well give up the frieze entirely.

TOM. Then give it up.

ANN. What?

TOM. Give up the whole thing—forever. Why shouldn't you?

NN. Do you mean that?
OM. Yes.
NN. Tom—I love you. Don't ask this sacrifice of me to prove my love.
OM. Could you make it? Could you?
NN. Don't ask it! Don't ask if for your own sake. I want to keep on loving you. I want to believe you're what I thought you were. Don't make me think you're just like every other man.
OM. I am a man—and you're my wife and Millicent's our daughter. Unless you come back to the things a woman's always had to do—and always will—we can't go on. We can't go on.
NN. (*Following him around the table.*) Tom—if you're just a little hurt—just a little jealous because I won——
OM. Oh——
NN. That's natural—I can understand that.
OM. Oh—don't——
NN. But, oh, Tom, the other—— to ask me to give it all up. I could never forgive that. Take it back, Tom—take it back.
OM. Good God, Ann, can't you see? You're a woman and I'm a man. You're not free in the same way. If you won't stop because I ask it—I say you *must*.
NN. You can't say that to me. You can't.
OM. I do say it.
NN. No!
OM. I say it because I know it's *right*.
NN. It isn't.
OM. I can't make you see it.
NN. It isn't.
OM. I don't know how—but everything in me tells me it's right.
NN. Tom—listen to me.
OM. If you won't do it because I ask you—I demand it. I say you've *got* to.
NN. Tom—you can kill our love by just what you do now.
OM. Then this work *is* the biggest thing in the world to you?
NN. What is more important to us both—to our happiness than just that?
ILLICENT. (*Calling outside door L. C.*) Mother! (*A startled pause as* ANN *and* TOM *turn towards hall door.*) Mother! I'm home, where are you?

(MILLICENT *opens the hall door and rushes into the room.*)

NN. Millicent! What are you doing here?
ILLICENT. I came home, mother.
NN. Why?
ILLICENT. Because I had to.
NN. Are you ill, dear?
ILLICENT. No. No.
OM. Is anything wrong at school?
ILLICENT. No, but I won't go back.
OM. But why won't you? What's the trouble?
ILLICENT. I won't go back.
OM. But you can't do a thing like this. I won't allow it.
ILLICENT. You wouldn't let me come home when I wanted to and now I can't go back. I won't—— everything's different now. I won't go back and you can't make me.

(*She turns and rushes out of the room and* TOM *and* ANN *stare at each other as the curtain falls.*

ACT III

IME: *Half an hour later.*
CENE: *Same as Act II. Ruth is writing at the desk.* DAISY *opens the hall door and stops, listening back into the hall.*

UTH. (*Quickly.*) What's the matter?
AISY. Nothing. I was looking to see who went up the stairs. It's Dr. Remington.
UTH. How's Millicent now?
AISY. Ann's with her—getting her to bed.
UTH. Do you know yet why she came home?
IASY. I don't know whether Ann's got it out of her yet or not.
UTH. What do you think? Why on earth didn't she tell them at school?
AISY. I haven't the dimmest—but she didn't do it without some good reason. I'll bet anything on that. Millicent's a pretty level-headed youngster.
UTH. She's a pretty self-willed one. Ann will send her right back of course.
AISY. I don't know whether she will or not. Millicent's got some rather decided ideas of her own on that.
UTH. But she'll *have* to go. Why shouldn't she? Ann will make her.
AISY. Tom will have something to say about it.
UTH. It's for Ann to decide surely.
AISY. Not at all. I don't see why. She is Tom's child, too, you know, and this is his house and he pays the bills at

school and if he doesn't want her to go back you can bet she jolly well won't go. I only hope Millicent tells the whole business whatever it is. Ann is so excited over the frieze I don't know whether she'll have the patience to handle Millicent right or not. She's not easy.

RUTH. It's awful for Ann to be upset now—of all times—when she has to begin this gigantic work.

DAISY. Oh—I wish the damned frieze were in Guinea and that Ann had nothing to do but take care of Tom and Millicent—like any other woman. I'd give *anything* if she hadn't won the competition.

RUTH. Daisy!

DAISY. Oh, I would. I have a ghastly feeling that something horrible is going to come of it—if it hasn't already come.

RUTH. What do you mean?

DAISY. I tell you it is not possible for a man and woman to love each other and live together and be happy—unless the man is—*it*.

RUTH. Speaking of the dark ages! You ought to live in a harem. How any girl who makes her own bread and butter can be so old fashioned as you are—I can't see.

DAISY. You've got so used to your own ideas your forget that I am the average normal woman the world is full of.

RUTH. Nonsense! You're almost extinct. I'm the average normal woman the world is full of—and it's going to be fuller and fuller.

DAISY. I'll bet on plenty of us—left—(*Indicating herself*) on Judgment day.

RUTH. I want to laugh when I think how mistaken we've been calling you a bachelor girl. Why you'd make the best wife of anybody I know.

DAISY. I s'pose you mean that as an insult.

RUTH. But you *seem* so self reliant men are sort of afraid of you—

REMINGTON. (*Coming in from hall and feeling a certain restraint in the two girls.*) Am I in the wrong camp.

RUTH and DAISY. No, no. Come in.

REMINGTON. I have to stay some place. I'm going to hang around till Millicent quiets down—and then I'll clear out.

DAISY. Is she ill?

REMINGTON. Oh, no. Just a little worked up and excited.

RUTH. Why do you think she came home Dr. Remington?

REMINGTON. I don't know what to think —unless she has *"boy"* in the head.

DAISY. Goodness no! Not yet!

REMINGTON. She's sixteen. You can choke it off to save your life.

RUTH. Oh, she's a baby!

REMINGTON. Don't fool yourself. She won't wait as long as you two have to sit by her own fireside with children on her knee.

RUTH. Oh—

REMINGTON. That's the only thing in the game that's worth a cent—anyway. (*As* KEITH *comes in from the hall.*) Isn't that so, Keith?

KEITH. What's that?

REMINGTON. I've just been telling these two that love and children are the greatest things on earth. Ruth doesn't agree with me—but Daisy—

RUTH. I must go.

DAISY. I must go up to Ann. (RUTH *goes out.*)

REMINGTON. Let *me* go. They both seem terribly anxious to get out when you come in, Keith. Or maybe I'm in the way. I'll go.

DAISY. Don't be silly. I really must see if I can do anything for Ann.

REMINGTON. No, you mustn't. She's waiting for me to see Millicent. By the way, Keith—tomorrow's Sunday. I always take a run into the country in the motor on Sunday. Come along and bring either Ruth or Daisy. Take your choice. I know which one I'd take. (*He goes into the hall.*)

DAISY. Isn't he a goose.

KEITH. Would it bore you to go, Daisy?

DAISY. Nonsense! Ruth will.

KEITH. It would be awfully good of you. Tomorrow's going to be a hard day for me to get through. Ruth told me last night that she—I'm afraid it's all over.

DAISY. Why don't you compromise?

KEITH. There's nothing to compromise about. She's all wrong. Don't you think so?

DAISY. Oh, don't ask me. I don't know anything about it.

KEITH. Wait a minute. I—won't you go tomorrow, Daisy.

DAISY. Ask Ruth. It will be a good chance to make up.

KEITH. You're so *practical* and like such *different* things—maybe you'd think flying along through the country and

unching at some nice little out-of-the-way place was too frivolous—

ISY. Oh yes, I don't like anything but being shut up in the house all day, pounding at my typewriter and splitting my head to get the bills straight. To actually go off with a man—for a whole day—and have a little fun—like any other woman—would be too unheard of. Of course, I couldn't do anything as silly as that.

ITH. Oh—

ISY. I wouldn't be amusing anyway. Dr. Remington—well, he's sixty, and you'd be thinking of Ruth and I'd sit there like a stick—the sensible, practical woman who couldn't possibly be interesting and fascinating because no man would take the trouble to find out how devilish and alluring and altogether exciting I could be if I had the chance. (*She throws open the door and goes out.* KEITH *stares after her.*)

OM. (*Coming in from library after a moment.*) I though you'd gone, McKenzie.

EITH. No, but I'm going.

EMINGTON. (*Coming back from hall.*) Good night, McKenzie. I'll dig you up in the morning, ten o'clock. Sharp, mind. And I'll call for Daisy first.

EITH. (*At hall door.*) All right. Much obliged, Doctor. (*Turning back.*) How'd you know it was Daisy?

EMINGTON. I didn't—but I do now.

EITH. Good night. (*He goes out.*)

OM. Well—how is she? How is Millicent?

EMINGTON. Oh, she's not ill—but the child's nervous as a witch—all strung up. She's worried about something—got something on her mind and naturally her head aches and she has a little fever—but that won't hurt her.

OM. Got something on her mind? What?

EMINGTON. She didn't confide in me.

OM. What *could* she have on her mind?

EMINGTON. I don't think she's committed murder—but she's *got* a mind, you know— There's no reason why she shouldn't have something *on* it.

OM. Well, *I* don't know what to do with her.

EMINGTON. If you think she ought *not* to go back to school, say so. Tell Ann those are your orders.

OM. I don't give orders to Ann.

EMINGTON. The devil you don't. She'd like it. A woman—a dog and a walnut tree—the more you beat 'em, the better they be.

TOM. The walnut tree business doesn't work with Ann. I made a fool of myself tonight by telling her I wouldn't touch the money she gets out of this thing. She doesn't understand. I've made her think I'm jealous because she won.

REMINGTON. Well, aren't you?

TOM. *No!* I tell you it's something else. Something sort of gave way under my feet when I opened her letter.

REMINGTON. I know. I know.

TOM. Doctor, for the Lord's sake, don't think I'm mean. I don't want to drag her back—but she seems gone somehow—she doesn't *need* me any more. *That's* what hurts.

REMINGTON. Of course, it hurts.

TOM. Much as I've loved to have her with me—working away at my elbow—wonderful as it all was—sometimes I've wished I hadn't seen her all day—that I had her to go home to—fresh and rested—waiting for *me* and that I was running the machine alone for her. She'll never understand. I've acted like a skunk.

REMINGTON. Y-e-s—I guess you have—so have I—unjust—pig-headed. No more right to say the things I've said to her than I have to spank her—except that she's—the most precious thing in the world to me—and I'd rather see her happy—as a woman—than *the greatest artist in the world.*

TOM. That's it. I want her here—*mine.* But I s'pose that's rotten and wrong.

REMINGTON. Yes—I s'pose it is. But you're despising yourself for something that's been in your bones—boy—since the beginning of time. Men and women will go through hell over this before it shakes down into shape. *You're* right and *she's* right and you're tearing each other like mad dogs over it because you love each other.

TOM. That's it. If another *man* had got it I'd take my licking without whining. What's the matter with me? Why can't I be that way to *her?*

REMINGTON. (*Shaking his head with a wistful smile.*) Male and female created He them. I don't take back any of the stuff I said to her before she went into this. She's fighting you now for her rights—but she laid her genius at your feet once and she'd do it again if—

ANN. (*Coming in from the hall and speaking after a pause.*) Well, father—what do you say about Millicent?

REMINGTON. My advice is that you let her stay at home for a while.

ANN. This is only a caprice—and it would be the worst thing in the world to give in to her. Unless you say as a physician—that she's too ill to—

REMINGTON. I don't say she's too ill—physically. You must decide for yourself. I'll go up and see her again and if she isn't asleep then I'll give her a mild sleeping powder. Ann, I put her in your arms first—and the look that came into your eyes then was as near divinity as we ever get. Oh, my daughter—don't let the new restlessness and strife of the world about you blind you to the old things—the real things. (*He goes out.*)

ANN. (*After a pause.*) You agree with me, don't you, that it's better for her to go back.

TOM. Do whatever you think best.

ANN. But what do *you* think?

TOM. It doesn't matter what I think, does it?

MILLICENT. (*Opening the door.*) Mother, aren't you coming back? (*Millicent wears a soft robe over her night gown. Her hair is down her back.*)

ANN. Millicent—why did you get out of bed?

MILLICENT. I couldn't sleep. (*Running and jumping into the middle of the couch.*)

ANN. Run back—quickly.

MILLICENT. In a minute. It's so quiet upstairs I couldn't sleep. I'm used to the girls.

ANN. You'll catch cold.

MILLICENT. Goodness, mother, I'm roasting.

ANN. *Millicent*—what *shall* I do with you.

MILLICENT. Is that what you and dad were talking about? What did Grandfather say? I don't care what he says. I'm not going back to school. You're on my side—aren't you, Dad?

TOM. Whatever your mother thinks is right, of course.

MILLICENT. Is it true—what Daisy told me—that you got the contract for a big frieze and not father? Is it? Is it, father? (*Looking from one to the other.*)

TOM. Yes. It's quite true.

ANN. Millicent, go to bed.

MILLICENT. I think that's perfectly ho rid, mother. Why should they give it t you? I think father ought to have it—he's the man. Don't you think peop will think it's funny that you didn't g it? I should think it would make the lose confidence in you. (*A pause.* To *stalks out—closing the door.*) Is fath hurt because you got it? I should thin he would be.

ANN. Millicent, I've had quite enough this. Go up to bed at once.

MILLICENT. Will you come up and slee with me?

ANN. Of course not. (*Walking about res lessly.*)

MILLICENT. Why not?

ANN. Neither one of us would sleep wink.

MILLICENT. That wouldn't matter. don't want to be alone.

ANN. Come now—I won't speak to yo again.

MILLICENT. What have you decided abo school?

ANN. I'll tell you in the morning.

MILLICENT. I won't go up till you tell m

ANN. Millicent—you will go at once, say.

MILLICENT. Oh, Mother, don't be cros Sit down and talk a minute.

ANN. It's late, dear. You must—

MILLICENT. That's nothing. We gir often talk till twelve.

ANN. Till twelve? Do the teache know it.

MILLICENT. Oh, mother, you're lovely Don't you suppose they *know* that th don't know everything that's going o Come and sit down, Mummie.

ANN. No! You must go to bed.

MILLICENT. But I won't go back to scho

ANN. (*Going to* MILLICENT, *who is st on the couch.*) You make it terrib hard for me, Millicent. You do know what's good for you, of cours I don't expect you to—but I *do* expe you to be obedient.

MILLICENT. But, Mother, I tell you I-

ANN. Don't be so rebellious. Now co upstairs, please dear, and—

MILLICENT. But I won't go back to scho mother, dear. I won't.

ANN. You say I treat you like a chil You *force* me to. If you don't want t to punish you—go upstairs at once a don't say another word.

MILLICENT. I won't go back.

N. Stop, I say!
LLICENT. I know what I want to do. 'm sixteen.
N. (*Their voices rising together.*) You're my child. You will obey me.
LLICENT. But I won't. You don't understand. I can't mother, I can't—I can't.
N. Why? Why can't you?
LLICENT. Because I—I'm going to be married.
N. You silly child!
LLICENT. It's the truth, Mother. I am.
N. Don't say a thing like that, even in fun.
LLICENT. It's the truth, I tell you. I'm going to be married.
N. Some time you are, of course—you mean.
LLICENT. No—now—soon. That's why I left. That's why I'm not going back.
N. (*After drawing a chair to the couch and sitting before* MILLICENT.) What do you mean?
LLICENT. I—he—we—we're engaged.
N. He—who?
LLICENT. You—You don't know him.
N. Who?
LLICENT. He's—he's perfectly wonderful.
N. *Who is he?*
LLICENT. Now, Mother, wait. He—he isn't rich—
N. Well—
LLICENT. He's poor—but he's perfectly wonderful—he works and he's so noble about it.
N. What does he do?
LLICENT. He—he—Oh, mother, it's hard to explain, because he's so different.
N. *What does he do?*
LLICENT. Well—just now he—he drives the motor at school—because you see he's so proud he—
N. Drives the motor—a chauffeur, you mean?
LLICENT. People call him that, of course—but he isn't— (ANN *rises.*) Mother— (ANN *goes to the door and locks it—going back to* MILLICENT, *who had risen.*) Now, Mother, don't look like that.
N. Sit down.
LLICENT. *Don't* look like that. Let me tell you about it.
N. (*Sitting again.*) Yes, tell me about it.
LLICENT. Oh, I—hardly know how to begin.

ANN. He drives the motor—the school motor, you say?
MILLICENT. Yes—to the trains, you know—and into town and to church.
ANN. Who is his father?
MILLICENT. Why—I—I don't know who he is. I've never met his father.
ANN. What is his name?
MILLICENT. His father's name? I don't know.
ANN. The *boy's* name.
MILLICENT. Willie Kern.
ANN. How does he happen to drive a motor?
MILLICENT. Well, I don't know just *how* it happened—he's so clever you know, and of course he isn't really a chauffeur at all.
ANN. What is he then?
MILLICENT. Oh, Mother! He just happens to run the school motor.
ANN. And what did he do before that?
MILLICENT. Why he—he ran *another* motor. Oh, now, Mother, you don't understand at all. (*She breaks into sobs and throws herself full length on the couch.* ANN *sits rigidly.*) Just because he's poor and clever and drives a motor is no reason why you should act this way. (*Sitting up.*) He's going to do something else. He's going to come to New York to get a different position. And we'll be married as soon as he gets it, and that's why I came home—to tell you. So there—you see I can't go back to school. (*She rises and starts to the door.*)
ANN. Millicent! Come here.
MILLICENT. That's all there is to tell. I'm going to bed now.
ANN. (*Rising.*) You know this is the most wild and impossible thing in the world.
MILLICENT. I don't. It *isn't* impossible. I'm going to marry him. I love him better than you or father or anybody in the world and I'm going to marry him.
ANN. Stop! Do you want to disgrace us? How any child of mine could speak—even speak to such a— Oh, the disappointment! Where's your pride? How *could* you? How could you? Millicent, if you'll promise me to give this up I won't say a word to your father.
MILLICENT. No—no—I'm going.
ANN. Don't unlock that door.
MILLICENT. I want to go now.
ANN. You'll never see this boy again. Never speak to him—never write to

him—never hear of him. I shall send you away where he'll never know—

MILLICENT. (*Coming back to couch.*) You won't! He loves me and I love him. He understands me. All that vacation when you wouldn't let me come home and all the other girls had gone he was just as good to me as he could be. He knew how lonely I was and he—we got engaged that vacation. You wouldn't let me come home.

ANN. Millicent—you don't know what you're saying. You don't know what you're doing.

MILLICENT. Oh, yes, I do, Mother. It's you that don't know. You don't understand.

ANN. (*Kneeling before Millicent.*) My darling—why—didn't you tell me this when you said you wanted to come home? Why didn't you tell me then? (*Sobbing,* ANN *buries her face in* MILLICENT'S *lap.*)

MILLICENT. I would have told you—if you'd let me come home—but you wouldn't—and I was so lonely there without the girls and—we—we got engaged. You don't understand, Mother.

ANN. (*Lifting her face to* MILLICENT.) Oh, yes, I do, dear. Yes, I do. Tell me—all about it. When did you first know him? How did you—happen to speak to him—I mean to—to love him.

MILLICENT. Oh, Mother, why I—he—I just did—he's so handsome and so nice. You haven't any idea how nice he is, Mother.

ANN. Haven't I, dear? What is he like? Tell me *everything*—how did it begin?

MILLICENT. He—the first time I really knew he was so different you know—

ANN. Yes, dear.

MILLICENT. Was one Sunday morning I was ready for church before anybody else and I went out to get in the motor and ran down the steps and fell, and he jumped out and picked me up and put me in the motor, and of course I thanked him and we had to wait quite a while for the others, and I found out how different and really wonderful he was. All the girls were crazy about him. Here's his picture. (*Drawing out a locket which is on a chain around her neck.*) It's just a little snapshot which I took myself one morning—and you can't really tell from this how awfully good looking he is. (ANN *seizes the locket and looks closely at the picture.*) His eyes are the most wonderful—a his lashes are the longest I ever sa You can't see his teeth and they are well, you'd just love his teeth, Mothe

ANN. Would I, dear? Have you se very much of him? Hawe you seen hi any place besides in the motor, I mea (MILLICENT *hesitates.*) Tell me, dear everything. I shall understand.

MILLICENT. Well, of course, Mother— *had* to see him some place else aft school began again and the girls we all back and I wasn't going for the ma any more.

ANN. Of course; and where *did* you s him?

MILLICENT. Why, you see, it—it w awfully hard, Mummie, because couldn't tell anybody. Nobody wou have *understood*—except Fanny. Sh such a dear. She's been so sympathet through the whole thing, and she h helped me a lot. There is a fire escape o of our room and Mondays and Thu days at nine o'clock at night—

ANN. Oh—

MILLICENT. What, Mother?

ANN. Nothing—go on, dear.

MILLICENT. At exactly nine I'd put Fanny's long black coat and go dow and he was always there and we alwa went down in the arbor just a lit while.

ANN. The arbor? Where was the arbo

MILLICENT. Down the path of the oth side of the drive—not far from t house; but of course nobody went ne it at that time of night—in cold weath and—and we'd talk a while and then I run back. You don't mind, do yo Mother. What else could I do?

ANN. And—he's kissed you—of course

MILLICENT. Of course.

ANN. And you've kissed him?

MILLICENT. (*Lowering her eyes.*) W yes—Mother—we're engaged.

ANN. And what did he say to you th in the arbor?

MILLICENT. I can't tell you *everything* said, Mother.

ANN. Why not, Millicent? I'm yo mother. No one on earth is so close you—or loves you so much—or cares much for your happiness—and undd stands so well. I remember when I w engaged to your father—I wasn't mu older than you—I know, dear. Tell what he said.

MILLICENT. He thinks I'm pretty, Moth

N. Yes, dear.

LLICENT. And he thinks I'm wonderful o understand him and to know what he eally is in spite of what he happens to e doing.

N. Yes—and how long did you usually tay there in the arbor?

LLICENT. Oh, not very long, only last ime it was longer. He teased so and couldn't help it. He—he—I—

N. How long was it that time?

LLICENT. Oh—it—it was almost two ours last time.

N. And what did you do all that time? Wasn't it cold?

LLICENT. He made me put on his over-oat—He *just made* me.

N. (*Holding* MILLICENT *close in her rms.*) And he held you close—and kissed you—and told you how much he loved you?

LLICENT. Yes, I love him so—Mother—but—I—tonight, was the last night to go again—but I—

NN. (*Holding* MILLICENT *off as she searches her face.*) Yes, dear?

LLICENT. I—I was—afraid to go.

NN. (*Shrieking.*) Why?

LLICENT. Oh, Mother—Was it wicked to be afraid? I ran away—I wanted to be with you. (ANN *snatches* MILLICENT *in her arms. Her head falls against* MILLICENT *and* MILLICENT'S *arms hold her close as she sobs. Someone tries the door and knocks.*)

OM. (*In the hall.*) Ann!—Ann!

NN. Yes?

OM. Why is the door locked?

NN. Millicent and I are talking. Wait just a few minutes. And Tom—tell her grandfather not to wait to see Millicent again tonight. She's all right.

OM. Sure?

NN. I'm sure.

ILLICENT. (*In a whisper—after listening a moment.*) What are you going to tell father?

NN. (*Sitting on the floor.*) Well—you see, dear—you're too young to be married now—much too young—and—

ILLICENT. Oh, now, Mother, if you're going to talk *that* way. Wait till you see him.

NN. That's just what I want to do. I've got such a lovely plan for us—for the summer.

ILLICENT. But I want to be married as soon as he gets his—

ANN. I know, his position—and while he's looking and getting settled you and I will go abroad.

MILLICENT. You're awfully good, Mother, but if you really want to do something for me—I'd rather you'd give me that money to be married.

ANN. But Millicent, my dear child—I *have* to go. I'm so tired. I've been working awfully hard this winter. You're the only one in the world who could really be with me and take care of me. I *need* you.

MILLICENT. Poor Mother! I don't want to be *selfish* and if you *need* me—I'll go.

ANN. (*Catching* MILLICENT *in her arms.*) Thank you, dear.

MILLICENT. *If* you'll promise me that I can be married when I get back.

ANN. (*Getting to her feet.*) If—you—*still—want* to—marry him when you come—back with me—you may. I promise.

MILLICENT. Mother! I didn't know you loved me so much.

ANN. Didn't you, dear? Now go to bed. (*They start to the door together.* ANN *catches* MILLICENT *again, kissing her tenderly as though she were something new and precious.*)

MILLICENT. What's the matter, Mother?

ANN. Nothing, dear— Good night.

MILLICENT. Good night.

TOM. (*Coming into doorway as* MILLICENT *unlocks and opens the door.*) Not in bed yet?

MILLICENT. (*Throwing her arms about her father's neck.*) Oh, dad. I'm so happy. (*She goes out.*)

ANN. (*Sitting at the fire.*) Come, in, Tom. I want to talk to you about Millicent.

TOM. (*Closing the door and going to* ANN.) What's the matter?

ANN. She thinks she's in love.

TOM. What?

ANN. Our baby. She wants to be married.

TOM. What do you mean?

ANN. That's why she came home.

TOM. Good Heavens, Ann! Married? What has she got mixed up in? How did such a thing happen? How *could* it?

ANN. Because I didn't let her come home when she wanted to. Don't say anything, Tom. I can't bear it now.

TOM. (*Putting a hand on her head tenderly.*) Don't dear! Don't! It—might have—happened—anyway.

ANN. Oh, the things that *can* happen!

TOM. Has she told you everything?

ANN. Everything.

TOM. What have you said to her? What are you going to do?

ANN. I'm going to take her away—and win her—till she gives up of her own free will—I shall have to have the wisdom of all the ages. I shall have to be more fascinating than the boy. That's a pretty big undertaking, Tom. I wonder if I'll be equal to it.

TOM. You mean you're going to give up your frieze and go away with her? (ANN *nods her head.*) You can't do it, Ann.

ANN. (*Rising and moving away.*) Oh, yes, I can.

TOM. You cannot. Don't lose your head. You're pledged to finish it and deliver it at a certain time. You can't play fast and lose with a big piece of work like that.

ANN. *You'll* have to make my frieze, Tom.

TOM. I will not! I utterly and absolutely refuse to. You make Millicent behave and break this thing up and you go on with your—

ANN. I can't. I can't. She's been in danger—absolute danger.

TOM. How?

ANN. Oh, I'll tell you. I'll tell you. She ran away to me—to me—and I was pushing her off. My little girl! She's got to be held tight in my arms and carried through.

TOM. Ann, I'm not going to allow this to wipe out what you've done. I'll settle her—

ANN. Tom, you can't speak of it to her—not breathe it—

TOM. Of course I will.

ANN. No you won't . If we cross her she'll get at him some way—somehow.

TOM. I'm not going to let you sacrif yourself for a wayward—

ANN. It's my job. She is what I've giv to life. If I fail her now—my wh life's a failure. Will you make frieze, dear, will you?

TOM. No. It's *yours.* You've got have the glory of it. Ann, I have been fair—but you're going to ha this and all that's coming to you. I not going to let anything take it aw from you. It's too important. My G you've not only beaten me—you've w over the biggest men in the field—w your own brain and your own hand in a fair, fine, hard fight. You're up now—but if you should give t thing up—there'll be times when yo eat your heart out to be at work on i when the artist in you will *yell* to let out.

ANN. I know. I know. And I'll h you because you're doing it—and hate myself because I gave it up—a I'll almost—hate—her. I know. know. You needn't tell me. Why I seen my men and women up ther their strong limbs stretched—their h blown back. I've seen the crowd lo ing up—I've heard people say— woman did that" and my heart has most burst with pride—not so mu that *I* had done it—but for *all* wom And then the door opened—and Mi cent came in. There isn't any cho Tom—she's part of my body—part my soul. Will you make my fri dear, will you? (*Falling against hi*

TOM. (*Taking her in his arms.*) darling! I'll do whatever makes easiest for you. Don't think I d know *all—all*—it means to you. God, it's hard.

ANN. (*Releasing herself and going to hall door.*) Put out the light. I h she's asleep. (*They go out into lighted hall. After a moment*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

BEYOND THE HORIZON

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

Eugene O'Neill

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BEYOND THE HORIZON

Beyond the Horizon represents the idealism of youth which demands venture, and even when frustrated by love, is conscious at the end that the ry possession of the dreams has been worth while. It presents also the work the playwright who is generally recognized to be the most significant of those ho are now writing for the stage in America.

So much that is incorrect has been published concerning the career of ugene O'Neill that it is a pleasure to present the facts of his life as given by e playwright himself, in a letter written at the request of the editor.

"As for the autobiography, I'll give it to you in brief herewith: I was rn October 16, 1888. My first seven years were spent mainly in the larger wns all over the United States—my mother accompanying my father on his ad tours in *Monte Cristo* and repertoire, although she was never an actress d had rather an aversion for the atmosphere and people of the stage in gen- al. After that came boarding school for six years in Catholic schools—then ur years at Betts Academy, Stamford, Connecticut and then Princeton Uni- ersity for one year in the Class of 1910. Then I worked for over a year as ecretary of a mail order house, a small affair, in New York City. The firm ent into bankruptcy. I never took it seriously. Discovering a chance to ork off some of my latent romanticism I went to Spanish Honduras with a ining engineer on a prospecting expedition—at the end of eight months or caught the malarial fever so bad that I had to be sent home. Much hard- hip, little romance, no gold. On my return to the United States I was made ssistant manager of *The White Sister* Company and toured from St. Louis ack through the Middle West to Boston with them. Having read Conrad's *igger of the Narcissus* some time before—also Jack London—I got the urge or the sea, sailing ships. So I sailed from Boston for Buenos Aires on a Norwegian Barque—sixty-five days out of sight of land. I remained in Buenos Aires for a year or so—worked with Westinghouse Electric Company, Swift Packing Company, Singer Sewing Machine Company, at different times. (This was in years 1910–1911.) I also worked on a cattle boat taking a voyage from Buenos Aires to Durban, South Africa and return. Then I was 'on the beach' for a considerable period in Buenos Aires with no job, eating and place to sleep intermittent. Finally I returned home as an ordinary seaman on a British tramp steamer to New York. After a period in New York loafing I became able seaman on the American Line steamers 'New York' and 'Phila- delphia.' This was my last experience as a sailor. I then became an actor in my father's company playing in *Monte Cristo* sketch, touring the Orpheum circuit in the far West. Then I worked as a reporter on a morning paper, New

London, Connecticut for six months or so. My health then broke down with slight touch of pulmonary tuberculosis resulting, so I spent six months in sanitarium. After I was released I started to write for the first time—this wa in 1913, the latter part I think. In that winter, 1913–1914, I wrote eight on act plays and two long plays. Of these *Bound East for Cardiff* is the only on worth remembering. In 1914–15 I attended Professor Baker's course at Har vard. The winter of 1915–16 was spent in Greenwich Village. In the summe of 1916 I came to Provincetown, joined the Provincetown Players and acte in my own plays, *Bound East for Cardiff* and *Thirst* at the theatre shed on th wharf here. When they opened the first season in New York, *Cardiff* was o the opening bill."

Since then Mr. O'Neill has devoted himself to the writing and direction o his plays, living at Provincetown for some years and now making his permaner residence at Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The Provincetown Players have produced nearly all of Mr. O'Neill's on act plays, *In the Zone* being the first to be performed elsewhere, being put o at the Comedy Theatre, November 1, 1918 by the Washington Square Player After the reorganization of the Provincetown Theatre group in 1923, M O'Neill continued as Associate Director of the Experimental Theatre. H association with the courageous band of producers, playwrights and actor under the leadership of Mr. Kenneth Macgowan, Mr. Robert Edmond Jone Mr. James Light, and Miss M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, has been one of the mo fruitful in the history of the American theatre.

Beyond the Horizon was Mr. O'Neill's first play to be performed by strictly professional company, being put on at a special matinee at the Morose Theatre, February 2, 1920. It had a successful run at the Criterion an the Little Theatres in New York but when taken to Chicago in the fall was n a popular success. It was however acclaimed by competent critics as the mo significant play that had appeared on the American stage for many years an was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best American play for 1919–20. Th cast was adequate, Mr. Richard Bennett as Robert Mayo, Mr. Robert Kelly Andy and Mrs. Louise Closser Hale as Mrs. Atkins giving especially brillian performances. While Mr. O'Neill's art has deepened and his inventive qua ity has progressed, *Beyond the Horizon* still remains the best of his plays f reading and study. For it is based upon the great truth that there is nothin so precious in our lives as our illusions; its form is compact, the action unified and progressive and the tragedy is inevitable. It has been played b many Little Theatre organizations throughout the United States, and almo invariably with artistic and financial success.

In the story of the two brothers, Robert and Andy Mayo, he drew a viv contrast of character and he made that contrast dramatic through their lo for the same woman whose shallow passion clutched at both their ambitions an wrecked them. In Robert Mayo we see O'Neill's own passion for adventu "beyond the horizon," where the sea is calling him. Robert is about to reali

when Ruth lets him see she cares for him and he gives up his dreams to marry r and settle down to the farming life for which he is unfit. Andy, unable to ay to watch their happiness, accepts the opportunity Robert has refused and t, successful as he seems to be, the play leaves him with a realization that all has won has been the money which is so easily lost. For to him, the farm as in the blood and his happiness was in it. How little he made of the "far reign places" is seen in Act II, Scene 2, when he describes with powerful alism just how the sailor travels much but sees nothing. For Robert, who ad the vision, the adventure would have been far different. It is unfortunate hat the play was not performed as it was written and as it is now printed. he second scene of Act III was omitted and the play closed on Andy's words Damn you, you never told him" transferred to the first scene as Andy ntered Robert's room to find him dead. For in the acted version there was lost ne great meaning of the play, expressed in Robert's words on the hillside: You mustn't feel sorry for me. Don't you see I'm happy at last—free—free— reed from the farm—free to wander on and on eternally!—I've won to my trip —beyond the horizon!" With a total misunderstanding of Mr. O'Neill's work, e has often been referred to as a pessimist. But in this fine last scene of *Beyond the Horizon* he revealed the truth that even if unrealized, Robert's dreams had made life worth while to him. On the contrary to Andy has come dis- ontent and to Ruth that "spent calm beyond the further troubling of any hope."

In *The Emperor Jones*, produced first at the Provincetown Theatre on November 1, 1920 and later at the Selwyn and the Princess Theatres, Mr. O'Neill created the character of "Brutus Jones," a negro adventurer who dominates a West Indian island by his courage and unscrupulousness. In this play Mr. O'Neill substituted a unity of impression for the unity of action. *Diff'rent*, a two-act play laid in a seaport village in New England in 1890 and in 1920, was first produced at the Provincetown Theatre on December 27, 1920, and was taken to the Princess Theatre on January 29, 1921. *Gold*, an expansion of a one-act play *Where the Cross is Made*, was produced at the Frazee Theatre, June 1, 1921 but failed. These two plays were less significant than *Anna Christie*, a masterly portrayal of the regeneration of a woman through the influence of the sea and the effect of a great passion for the one kind of man who might save her from the effects of the past. In this play Miss Pauline Lord and Mr. George Marion as Anna Christie and Chris Christopherson, her father, gave two remarkable performances. The play received the Pulitzer Prize for the season of 1921–22. It opened at the Vanderbilt Theatre, November 2, 1921, and after a successful run went on tour.

The Straw, in which Mr. O'Neill showed how love and hope can almost triumph even at the hour of death, had a short run at the Greenwich Village Theatre beginning November 10, 1921. The superb acting of Mr. Otto Kruger and Miss Margalo Gillmore in the last scene of this play was unable to save one of the finest of Mr. O'Neill's plays from the disastrous effects of the worst theatrical season in recent years.

The First Man, a dramatic picture of the struggle which may occur in a man's soul between his love for his child and his profession, was performed at the Neighborhood Playhouse, March 4, 1922, as part of the season's repertoire. *The Hairy Ape,* like *The Emperor Jones* was presented in a series of scenes rather than in acts. It represented the struggle upward of a merely physical type, a stoker on an ocean liner, and the tragedy of misguided power which such a struggle brings about. No place in the scheme of things is found for such a being and he is finally crushed to death by the gorilla in the Zoological Gardens who has had no more sympathy with him than his fellow human beings. *The Hairy Ape* was first produced March 9, 1922 at the Provincetown Theatre and was then taken to the Plymouth Theatre, where it ran until it was taken on tour. *Welded,* a conflict between a man and woman whose capacity to torture each other is measured only in the terms of their great mutual passion, had only a short run at the Thirty Ninth Street Theatre, beginning March 17, 1924. The leading members of the cast were incapable of interpreting the spiritual significance of the drama. Mr. O'Neill's next play, *All God's Chillun Got Wings* provoked much discussion on account of its treatment of the race question. The present editor is probably one of many who did not realize the significance of the play at first reading but who were profoundly impressed by the chief character, "Jim Harris" as interpreted by Mr. Paul Robeson. On November 3, 1924, four of the earlier one act plays of the sea, *The Moon of the Caribbees, The Long Voyage Home, In the Zone,* and *Bound East for Cardiff* were produced together at the Provincetown Theatre as the *S. S. Glencairn.* It was a highly interesting experience to note the way in which the recurrence of the characters brought into the production a unity of impression. *Desire Under the Elms,* which was first produced at the Greenwich Village Theatre on November 11, 1924, is a searching study of the New England nature with a background of the middle of the last century. It reveals in the characters of Ephraim Cabot and Eben, his son, a combination of profound belief in the supernatural; the determination to win in a hard struggle even against God; the recognition of God as an opponent who is to be respected rather than loved; and at the same time a shrewd disposition to maintain one's own property rights. Mr. Walter Huston gave a sympathetic interpretation of Ephraim Cabot, one of the most profoundly studied of Mr. O'Neill's characters.

A complete list of the foreign performances of Mr. O'Neill's plays cannot be given, since many are produced without authorization. Based upon information furnished by Mr. O'Neill and his agent, Mr. Madden, and supplemented by other sources, the following account will indicate at least the wide spread interest in his work abroad. At the Everyman Theatre in London, Mr. Norman MacDermott produced *In the Zone* (June 15, 1921), *Diff'rent* (October 4, 1921) and *Ile* (April 17, 1922). *Anna Christie* was produced in London at the Strand Theatre, April 10, 1923. It was received with unstinted critical admiration although popular approval was not continuous. When produced at the Deutsches Theatre in Berlin, October 10, 1923, it was translated by the Hun-

rian dramatist, Lengyel, and Anna Christie shot herself! Notwithstanding is unfortunate introduction to the Continent, it has been played in 1923 in weden, Norway and Denmark, in 1924 in Spain, in Vienna and in Moscow and, Paolo Giordani's translation, in Italy. It has been played in English through any of the coast cities in the Orient. *The Emperor Jones* was produced in aris on October 31, 1923 at the Odéon, in a translation by Maurice Bourgeois, he title role being taken by Benglia, a noted negro colonial actor. Again great berties were taken with the play by M. Gémier, the director, who omitted the triking scene in the slave ship, and interpolated meaningless pantomimes beween the scenes. Yet the early reception of the play was enthusiastic, according to competent eye-witnesses even if the critical reports are contradictory. The production in Berlin in January, 1924, was apparently not adequate. The play is scheduled for production by Max Reinhardt, in Vienna and Berlin, where Reinhardt put on *The Hairy Ape* in November, 1924, at the Freie Bühne. *All God's Chillun Got Wings* is also definitely announced for production under Reinhardt's direction, in Vienna. *The Hairy Ape* was performed with distinction in Prague and *The Emperor Jones* is also to be played there. At the present time *The Hairy Ape* is being played at the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow and has been seen in Sydney, Australia. *The Moon of the Caribbees* was played in November, 1924 in Kiel and is to be done in Hamburg and arrangements have been made for its production as well as those of *Ile, In the Zone* and *Bound East for Cardiff* in Norway.

Meanwhile Mr. O'Neill's plays have been widely circulated in translation on the Continent, and finally, to establish his position as a dramatist of universal appeal, *Beyond the Horizon* has been translated into Japanese.

Mr. O'Neill's plays have just been published in a revised form in two volumes in a limited autographed edition published by Boni and Liveright, New York (December, 1924). In Volume 1, the following plays appear: *Anna Christie, Beyond The Horizon, The First Man, Diff'rent, Gold, The Moon of the Caribbees, Bound East for Cardiff, The Long Voyage Home, In the Zone, Ile.* In Volume 2, the following plays appear: *Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, All God's Chillun Got Wings, Desire under The Elms, Welded, The Straw, The Rope, The Dreamy Kid, Where The Cross Is Made, Before Breakfast.* Through the courtesy of the author and the publishers, who furnished advance proof sheets of this edition, *Beyond The Horizon* is presented here in the final revised form as authorized by Mr. O'Neill.

His plays have been separately published as follows: *Thirst and other One Act Plays* (*Thirst, The Web, Warnings, Fog, Recklessness*), The Gorham Press, Boston, 1914. *Before Breakfast* was published in The Third Series of *Provincetown Plays,* Shay, New York, 1916. Since then the following volumes have been published by Boni and Liveright: *The Moon of the Caribbees and Six Other Plays of the Sea* (*The Moon of the Caribbees, Bound East for Cardiff, The Long Voyage Home, In the Zone, Ile, Where the Cross is Made, The Rope*) 1919; *Beyond The Horizon,* 1920; *Gold,* 1921; *The Emperor Jones, Diff'rent, The*

Straw (in one volume) 1921. *Anna Christie, The Hairy Ape, The First Man* (in one volume) 1922; *All God's Chillun Got Wings, Welded* (in one volume) 1924.

Much has been written about Mr. O'Neill and his work but little of permanent value. Perhaps the most helpful treatments will be found in the following: Clayton Hamilton, *Conversations on Contemporary Drama,* New York, 1924, pp. 198–218; Oliver M. Sayler, *Our American Theatre,* New York, 1923, pp. 27–43; Walter Prichard Eaton, "Eugene O'Neill as a Dramatist," *Theatre Arts Magazine,* Vol. 4, pp. 286–9, Oct. 1920; Pierre Loving, "Enter Eugene O'Neill," Bookman, Vol. 53, pp. 511–20, Aug., 1921; E. A. Baughan, a review of the plays in the *Fortnightly,* Vol. 113, pp. 852–60, May, 1923; Rudolph Kommer, "O'Neill in Europe," *New York Times,* Nov. 9, 1924; and by the present editor, *Scribner's Magazine,* Vol. 72., pp. 97–108, July, 1922, in an article "The Significance of Recent American Drama" reprinted as an introduction to *Contemporary American Plays,* New York, 1923, in which *Emperor Jones* appears.

For special treatment of *Beyond the Horizon,* see the analysis of the play by Ludwig Lewisohn in the *Nation,* Vol. 110, pp. 241–42, Feb. 21, 1920.

Note to Fourth Edition.

With *The Fountain,* written during 1921-22, but not produced until 1925, Mr. O'Neill began a period of romantic symbolism. Juan Ponce de Leon became a symbol of the search for the fountain of eternal youth, and even in his failure, there was a note of exaltation. In *The Great God Brown,* produced January 23, 1926, at the Greenwich Village Theatre, Mr. O'Neill represented symbolically the struggle between the creative artist and the modern world. The characters wore masks at times, which concealed their real natures, and the tragedy which overcomes Brown, the business man, when he inherits the mask of Dion Anthony, the artist, and is torn by the duality of his nature, made a profound impression. *Marco Millions,* first performed on January 9, 1928, is a romance of the days of Marco Polo, whose spirit of commercial adventure is contrasted with the longing of the Orient, patient in its wisdom, and hoping for new light from the West, but receiving only the latest financial methods. The Theatre Guild made of it a gorgeous spectacle. The Guild also produced *Strange Interlude* on January 30, 1928, a profound study of a woman's clutch upon the lives of five men, her father, her husband, her son, and her two other lovers who represent the spiritual and the physical elements in love. In this play which held audiences spellbound through nine acts, Mr. O'Neill prefaced the words spoken by the characters to each other by thoughts uttered aloud, which the art of the production made natural and impressive. *Lazarus Laughed,* published in 1927 and produced at the Pasadena Community Playhouse, April 9, 1928, marks the summit of Mr. O'Neill's achievement, in poetry and in dramatic effectiveness. It portrays the life of Lazarus, after his return from the grave

aring the message that there is no death. Through vivid stage pictures in which rge groups of characters, masked to typify various aspects of mankind, form a horus, Lazarus conquers even the Emperor Tiberius by the force of his spirit, ut becomes eventually a martyr.

The Great God Brown, The Fountain, The Moon of the Caribbees, and ther Plays, were published in one volume in 1926; *Marco Millions* and *Lazarus aughed* appeared separately in 1927 and *Strange Interlude* in 1928, all issued y Boni & Liveright.

A monograph, *Eugene O'Neill,* by Barrett H. Clark, New York, 1926, contains valuable biographical material and bibliographies. See also "The Playwright Unbound" in T. H. Dickinson's *Playwrights of the New American Theater* and "Eugene O'Neill, Poet and Mystic" in the present editor's *History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day,* Vol. II., Chap. 21.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in the order of their appearance)

Morosco Theatre, New York, February 2, 1920

ROBERT MAYO } sons of JAMES MAYO } .....Richard Bennett

ANDREW MAYO } sons of JAMES MAYO } .....Robert Kelly

RUTH ATKINS.....Elsie Rizer

CAPT. DICK SCOTT, MRS. MAYO's brother, of the bark *Sunda*.....Sidney Macy

MRS. KATE MAYO, wife of JAMES MAYO.....Mary Jeffery

JAMES MAYO, a farmer.....Erville Alderson

MRS. ATKINS, RUTH's widowed mother.....Louise Closser Hale

MARY.....Elfin Finn

BEN, a farm hand.....George Hadden

DR. FAWCETT.....George Riddell

ACT I

SCENE I: The Road. Sunset of a day in Spring.
SCENE II: The Farm House. The same night.

ACT II

(*Three years later*)

SCENE I: The Farm House. Noon of a Summer day.
SCENE II: The top of a hill on the farm overlooking the sea. The following day.

ACT III

(*Five years later*)

SCENE I: The Farm House. Dawn of a day in late Fall.
SCENE II: The Road. Sunrise.

BEYOND THE HORIZON

ACT ONE

Scene One

Scene. A section of country highway. The road runs diagonally from the left, forward, to the right, rear, and can be seen in the distance winding toward the horizon like a pale ribbon between the low, rolling hills with their freshly plowed fields clearly divided from each other, checkerboard fashion, by the lines of stone walls and rough snake fences. The forward triangle cut off by the road is a section of a field from the dark earth of which myriad bright-green blades of fall-sown rye are sprouting. A straggling line of piled rocks, too low to be called a wall, separates this field from the road.

To the rear of the road is a ditch with a sloping, grassy bank on the far side. From the center of this an old, gnarled apple tree, just budding into leaf, strains its twisted branches heavenwards, black against the pallor of distance: A snake-fence sidles from left to right along the top of the bank, passing beneath the apple tree.

The hushed twilight of the day in May is just beginning. The horizon hills are still rimmed by a faint line of flame, and the sky above them glows with the crimson flush of the sunset. This fades gradually as the action of the scene progresses.

At the rise of the curtain, Robert Mayo *is discovered sitting on the fence. He is a tall, slender young man of twenty-three. There is a touch of the poet about him expressed in his high forehead and wide, dark eyes. His features are delicate and refined, leaning to weakness in the mouth and chin. He is dressed in gray corduroy trousers pushed into high laced boots, and a blue flannel shirt with a bright colored tie. He is reading a book by the fading sunset light. He shuts this, keeping a finger in to mark the place, and turns his head toward the horizon, gazing out over the fields and hills. His lips move as if he were reciting something to himself.*

His brother Andrew *comes along the road from the right, returning from his work in the fields. He is twenty-seven years old, an opposite type to* Robert—*husky, sun-bronzed, handsome in a large-featured, manly fashion—a son of the soil, intelligent in a shrewd way, but with nothing of the intellectual about him. He wears overalls, leather boots, a gray flannel shirt open at the neck, and a soft, mud-stained hat pushed back on his head. He stops to talk to* Robert, *leaning on the hoe he carries.*

Andrew. (*Seeing* Robert *has not noticed his presence—in a loud shout.*) Hey there! (Robert *turns with a start. Seeing who it is, he smiles.*) Gosh, you do take the prize for day-dreaming! And I see you've toted one of the old books along with you. (*He crosses the ditch and sits on the fence near his brother.*) What is it this time—poetry, I'll bet. (*He reaches for the book.*) Let me see.

Robert. (*Handing it to him rather reluctantly.*) Look out you don't get it full of dirt.

Andrew. (*Glancing at his hands.*) That isn't dirt—it's good clean earth. (*He turns over the pages. His eyes read something and he gives an exclamation of disgust.*) Hump! (*With a provoking grin at his brother he reads aloud in a doleful, sing-song voice.*) "I have loved wind and light and the bright sea. But holy and most sacred night, not as I love and have loved thee." (*He hands the book back.*) Here! Take it and bury it. I suppose it's that year in college gave you a liking for that kind of stuff. I'm darn glad I stopped at High School, or maybe I'd been crazy too.

(*He grins and slaps* ROBERT *on the back affectionately.*) Imagine me reading poetry and plowing at the same time! The team'd run away, I'll bet.

ROBERT. (*Laughing.*) Or picture me plowing.

ANDREW. You should have gone back to college last fall, like I know you wanted to. You're fitted for that sort of thing —just as I ain't.

ROBERT. You know why I didn't go back, Andy. Pa didn't like the idea, even if he didn't say so; and I know he wanted the money to use improving the farm. And besides, I'm not keen on being a student, just because you see me reading books all the time. What I want to do now is keep on moving so that I won't take root in any one place.

ANDREW. Well, the trip you're leaving on to-morrow will keep you moving all right. (*At this mention of the trip they both fall silent. There is a pause. Finally* ANDREW *goes on, awkwardly, attempting to speak casually.*) Uncle says you'll be gone three years.

ROBERT. About that, he figures.

ANDREW. (*Moodily.*) That's a long time.

ROBERT. Not so long when you come to consider it. You know the *Sunda* sails around the Horn for Yokohama first, and that's a long voyage on a sailing ship; and if we go to any of the other places Uncle Dick mentions—India, or Australia, or South Africa, or South America—they'll be long voyages, too.

ANDREW. You can have all those foreign parts for all of me. (*After a pause.*) Ma's going to miss you a lot, Rob.

ROBERT. Yes—and I'll miss her.

ANDREW. And Pa ain't feeling none too happy to have you go—though he's been trying not to show it.

ROBERT. I can see how he feels.

ANDREW. And you can bet that I'm not giving any cheers about it. (*He puts one hand on the fence near* ROBERT.)

ROBERT. (*Putting one hand on top of* ANDREW'S *with a gesture almost of shyness.*) I know that, too, Andy.

ANDREW. I'll miss you as much as anybody, I guess. You see, you and I ain't like most brothers—always fighting and separated a lot of the time, while we've always been together—just the two of us. It's different with us. That's why it hits so hard, I guess.

ROBERT. (*With feeling.*) It's just as hard for me, Andy—believe that! I hate to leave you and the old folks—but—I feel I've got to. There's something calling me— (*He points to the horizon.*) Oh, I can't just explain it to you, Andy.

ANDREW. No need to, Rob. (*Angry at himself.*) Hell! You want to go—that's all there is to it; and I wouldn't have you miss this chance for the world.

ROBERT. It's fine of you to feel that way, Andy.

ANDREW. Huh! I'd be a nice son-of-a-gun if I didn't, wouldn't I? When I know how you need this sea trip to make a new man of you—in the body, I mean—and give you your full health back.

ROBERT. (*A trifle impatiently.*) All of you seem to keep harping on my health! You were so used to seeing me lying around the house in the old days that you never will get over the notion that I'm a chronic invalid. You don't realize how I've bucked up in the past few years. If I had no other excuse for going on Uncle Dick's ship but just my health, I'd stay right here and start in plowing.

ANDREW. Can't be done. Farming ain't your nature. There's all the difference shown in just the way us two feel about the farm. You—well, you like the home part of it, I expect; but as a place to work and grow things, you hate it. Ain't that right?

ROBERT. Yes, I suppose it is. For you it's different. You're a Mayo through and through. You're wedded to the soil. You're as much a product of it as an ear of corn is, or a tree. Father is the same. This farm is his life-work, and he's happy in knowing that another Mayo, inspired by the same love, will take up the work where he leaves off. I can understand your attitude, and Pa's; and I think it's wonderful and sincere. But I—well, I'm not made that way.

ANDREW. No, you ain't; but when it comes to understanding, I guess I realize that you've got your own angle of looking at things.

ROBERT. (*Musingly.*) I wonder if you do really.

ANDREW. (*Confidently.*) Sure I do. You've seen a bit of the world, enough to make the farm seem small, and you've got the itch to see it all.

ROBERT. It's more than that, Andy.

NDREW. Oh, of course. I know you're going to learn navigation, and all about a ship, so's you can be an officer. That's natural, too. There's fair pay in it, I expect, when you consider that you've always got a home and grub thrown in; and if you're set on traveling, you can go anywhere you're a mind to without paying fare.

OBERT. (*With a smile that is half sad.*) It's more than that, Andy.

NDREW. Sure it is. There's always a chance of a good thing coming your way in some of those foreign ports or other. I've heard there are great opportunities for a young fellow with his eyes open in some of those new countries that are just being opened up. (*Jovially.*) I'll bet that's what you've been turning over in your mind under all your quietness! (*He slaps his brother on the back, with a laugh.*) Well, if you get to be a millionaire all of a sudden, call 'round once in a while and I'll pass the plate to you. We could use a lot of money right here on the farm without hurting it any.

ROBERT. (*Forced to laugh.*) I've never considered that practical side of it for a minute, Andy.

ANDREW. Well, you ought to.

ROBERT. No, I oughtn't. (*Pointing to the horizon—dreamily.*) Supposing I was to tell you that it's just Beauty that's calling me, the beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East which lures me in the books I've read, the need of the freedom of great wide spaces, the joy of wandering on and on—in quest of the secret which is hidden over there, beyond the horizon? Suppose I told you that was the one and only reason for my going?

ANDREW. I should say you were nutty.

ROBERT. (*Frowning.*) Don't, Andy. I'm serious.

ANDREW. Then you might as well stay here, because we've got all you're looking for right on this farm. There's wide space enough, Lord knows; and you can have all the sea you want by walking a mile down to the beach; and there's plenty of horizon to look at, and beauty enough for anyone, except in the winter. (*He grins.*) As for the mystery and spell, I haven't met 'em yet, but they're probably lying around somewheres. I'll have you understand this is a first class farm with all the fixings. (*He laughs.*)

ROBERT. (*Joining in the laughter in spite of himself.*) It's no use talking to you, you chump!

ANDREW. You'd better not say anything to Uncle Dick about spells and things when you're on the ship. He'll likely chuck you overboard for a Jonah. (*He jumps down from fence.*) I'd better run along. I've got to wash up some as long as Ruth's Ma is coming over for supper.

ROBERT. (*Pointedly—almost bitterly.*) And Ruth.

ANDREW. (*Confused—looking everywhere except at* ROBERT—*trying to appear unconcerned.*) Yes, Ruth'll be staying too. Well, I better hustle, I guess, and— (*He steps over the ditch to the road while he is talking.*)

ROBERT. (*Who appears to be fighting some strong inward emotion—impulsively.*) Wait a minute, Andy! (*He jumps down from the fence.*) There is something I want to— (*He stops abruptly, biting his lips, his face coloring.*)

ANDREW. (*Facing him; half-defiantly.*) Yes?

ROBERT. (*Confusedly.*) No—never mind—it doesn't matter, it was nothing.

ANDREW. (*After a pause, during which he stares fixedly at* ROBERT'S *averted face.*) Maybe I can guess—what you were going to say—but I guess you're right not to talk about it. (*He pulls* ROBERT'S *hand from his side and grips it tensely; the two brothers stand looking into each other's eyes for a minute.*) We can't help those things, Rob. (*He turns away, suddenly releasing* ROBERT'S *hand.*) You'll be coming along shortly, won't you?

ROBERT. (*Dully.*) Yes.

ANDREW. See you later, then. (*He walks off down the road to the left.* ROBERT *stares after him for a moment; then climbs to the fence rail again, and looks out over the hills, an expression of deep grief on his face. After a moment or so,* RUTH *enters hurriedly from the left. She is a healthy, blonde, out-of-door girl of twenty, with a graceful, slender figure. Her face, though inclined to roundness, is undeniably pretty, its large eyes of a deep blue set off strikingly by the sun-bronzed complexion. Her small, regular features are marked by a certain strength—an underlying, stubborn fixity of purpose hidden in the frankly-appealing charm of her fresh youthful-*

ness. She wears a simple white dress but no hat.)

RUTH. (*Seeing him.*) Hello, Rob!

ROBERT. (*Startled.*) Hello, Ruth!

RUTH. (*Jumps the ditch and perches on the fence beside him.*) I was looking for you.

ROBERT. (*Pointedly.*) Andy just left here.

RUTH. I know. I met him on the road a second ago. He told me you were here. (*Tenderly playful.*) I wasn't looking for Andy, Smarty, if that's what you mean. I was looking for *you.*

ROBERT. Because I'm going away tomorrow?

RUTH. Because your mother was anxious to have you come home and asked me to look for you. I just wheeled Ma over to your house.

ROBERT. (*Perfunctorily.*) How is your mother?

RUTH. (*A shadow coming over her face.*) She's about the same. She never seems to get any better or any worse. Oh, Rob, I do wish she'd try to make the best of things that can't be helped.

ROBERT. Has she been nagging at you again?

RUTH. (*Nods her head, and then breaks forth rebelliously.*) She never stops nagging. No matter what I do for her she finds fault. If only Pa were still living— (*She stops as if ashamed of her outburst.*) I suppose I shouldn't complain this way. (*She sighs.*) Poor Ma, Lord knows it's hard enough for her. I suppose it's natural to be cross when you're not able ever to walk a step. Oh, I'd like to be going away some place—like you!

ROBERT. It's hard to stay—and equally hard to go, sometimes.

RUTH. There! If I'm not the stupid body! I swore I wasn't going to speak about your trip—until after you'd gone; and there I go, first thing!

ROBERT. Why didn't you want to speak of it?

RUTH. Because I didn't want to spoil this last night you're here. Oh, Rob, I'm going to—we're all going to miss you so awfully. Your mother is going around looking as if she'd burst out crying any minute. You ought to know how I feel. Andy and you and I—why it seems as if we'd always been together.

ROBERT. (*With a wry attempt at a smile.*) You and Andy will still have each other. It'll be harder for me without anyone.

RUTH. But you'll have new sights and new people to take your mind off; while we'll be here with the old, familiar place to remind us every minute of the day. It's a shame you're going—just at this time, in spring, when everything is getting so nice. (*With a sigh.*) I oughtn't to talk that way when I know going is the best thing for you. You're bound to find all sorts of opportunities to get on, your father says.

ROBERT. (*Heatedly.*) I don't give a damn about that! I wouldn't take a voyage across the road for the best opportunity in the world of the kind Pa thinks of. (*He smiles at his own irritation.*) Excuse me, Ruth, for getting worked up over it; but Andy gave me an overdose of the practical considerations.

RUTH. (*Slowly puzzled.*) Well, then, if it isn't— (*With sudden intensity.*) Oh, Rob, why *do* you want to go?

ROBERT. (*Turning to her quickly, in surprise—slowly.*) Why do you ask that, Ruth?

RUTH. (*Dropping her eyes before his searching glance.*) Because— (*Lamely.*) It seems such a shame.

ROBERT. (*Insistently.*) Why?

RUTH. Oh, because—everything.

ROBERT. I could hardly back out now, even if I wanted to. And I'll be forgotten before you know it.

RUTH. (*Indignantly.*) You won't! I'll never forget— (*She stops and turns away to hide her confusion.*)

ROBERT. (*Softly.*) Will you promise me that?

RUTH. (*Evasively.*) Of course. It's mean of you to think that any of us will forget so easily.

ROBERT. (*Disappointedly.*) Oh!

RUTH. (*With an attempt at lightness.*) But you haven't told me your reason for leaving yet?

ROBERT. (*Moodily.*) I doubt if you'll understand. It's difficult to explain even to myself. Either you feel it, or you don't. I can remember being conscious of it first when I was only a kid—you haven't forgotten what a sickly specimen I was then, in those days, have you?

RUTH. (*With a shudder.*) Let's not think about them.

BERT. You'll have to, to understand. Well, in those days, when Ma was fixng meals, she used to get me out of the way by pushing my chair to the west window and telling me to look out and be quiet. That wasn't hard. I guess I was always quiet.

TH. (*Compassionately.*) Yes, you always were—and you suffering so much, too!

BERT. (*Musingly.*) So I used to stare out over the fields to the hills, out there— (*He points to the horizon*) and somehow after a time I'd forget any pain I was in, and start dreaming. I knew the sea was over beyond those hills,—the folks had told me—and I used to wonder what the sea was like, and try to form a picture of it in my mind. (*With a smile.*) There was all the mystery in the world to me then about that —far-off-sea—and there still is! It called to me then just as it does now. (*After a slight pause.*) And other times my eyes would follow this road, winding off into the distance, toward the hills, as if it, too, was searching for the sea. And I'd promise myself that when I grew up and was strong, I'd follow that road, and it and I would find the sea together. (*With a smile.*) You see, my making this trip is only keeping that promise of long ago.

UTH. (*Charmed by his low, musical voice telling the dreams of his childhood.*) Yes, I see.

OBERT. Those were the only happy moments of my life then, dreaming there at the window. I liked to be all alone —those times. I got to know all the different kinds of sunsets by heart. And all those sunsets took place over there— (*He points*) beyond the horizon. So gradually I came to believe that all the wonders of the world happened on the other side of those hills. There was the home of the good fairies who performed beautiful miracles. I believed in fairies then. (*With a smile.*) Perhaps I still do believe in them. Anyway, in those days they were real enough, and sometimes I could actually hear them calling to me to come out and play with them, dance with them down the road in the dusk in a game of hide-and-seek to find out where the sun was hiding himself. They sang their little songs to me, songs that told of all the wonderful things they had in their home on the other side of the hills; and they promised to show me all of them, if I'd only come, come! But I couldn't come then, and I used to cry sometimes and Ma would think I was in pain. (*He breaks off suddenly with a laugh.*) That's why I'm going now, I suppose. For I can still hear them calling. But the horizon is as far away and as luring as ever. (*He turns to her—softly.*) Do you understand now, Ruth?

RUTH. (*Spellbound, in a whisper.*) Yes.

ROBERT. You feel it then?

RUTH. Yes, yes, I do! (*Unconsciously she snuggles close against his side. His arm steals about her as if he were not aware of the action.*) Oh, Rob, how could I help feeling? You tell things so beautifully!

ROBERT. (*Suddenly realizing that his arm is around her, and that her head is resting on his shoulder, gently takes his arm away.* RUTH, *brought back to herself, is overcome with confusion.*) So now you know why I'm going. It's for that reason—that and one other.

RUTH. You've another? Then you must tell me that, too.

ROBERT. (*Looking at her searchingly. She drops her eyes before his gaze.*) I wonder if I ought to. You'll promise not to be angry—whatever it is?

RUTH. (*Softly, her face still averted.*) Yes, I promise.

ROBERT. (*Simply.*) I love you. That's the other reason.

RUTH. (*Hiding her face in her hands.*) Oh, Rob!

ROBERT. I wasn't going to tell you, but I feel I have to. It can't matter now that I'm going so far away, and for so long—perhaps forever. I've loved you all these years, but the realization never came 'til I agreed to go away with Uncle Dick. Then I thought of leaving you, and the pain of that thought revealed to me in a flash—that I loved you, had loved you as long as I could remember. (*He gently pulls one of* RUTH'S *hands away from her face.*) You mustn't mind my telling you this, Ruth. I realize how impossible it all is—and I understand; for the revelation of my own love seemed to open my eyes to the love of others. I saw Andy's love for you—and I knew that you must love him.

RUTH. (*Breaking out stormily.*) I don't!

I don't love Andy! I don't! (ROBERT *stares at her in stupid astonishment.* RUTH *weeps hysterically.*) Whatever—put such a fool notion into—into your head? (*She suddenly throws her arms about his neck and hides her head on his shoulder.*) Oh, Rob! Don't go away! Please! You mustn't, now! You can't! I won't let you! It'd break my—my heart!

ROBERT. (*The expression of stupid bewilderment giving way to one of overwhelming joy. He presses her close to him—slowly and tenderly.*) Do you mean that—that you love me?

RUTH. (*Sobbing.*) Yes, yes—of course I do—what d'you s'pose? (*She lifts up her head and looks into his eyes with a tremulous smile.*) You stupid thing! (*He kisses her.*) I've loved you right along.

ROBERT. (*Mystified.*) But you and Andy were always together!

RUTH. Because you never seemed to want to go any place with me. You were always reading an old book, and not paying any attention to me. I was too proud to let you see I cared because I thought the year you had away to college had made you stuck-up, and you thought yourself too educated to waste any time on me.

ROBERT. (*Kissing her.*) And I was thinking— (*With a laugh.*) What fools we've both been!

RUTH. (*Overcome by a sudden fear.*) You won't go away on the trip, will you, Rob? You'll tell them you can't go on account of me, won't you? You can't go now! You can't!

ROBERT. (*Bewildered.*) Perhaps—you can come too.

RUTH. Oh, Rob, don't be so foolish. You know I can't. Who'd take care of Ma? Don't you see I couldn't go—on her account? (*She clings to him imploringly.*) Please don't go—not now. Tell them you've decided not to. They won't mind. I know your mother and father'll be glad. They'll all be. They don't want you to go so far away from them. Please, Rob! We'll be so happy here together where it's natural and we know things. Please tell me you won't go!

ROBERT. (*Face to face with a definite, final decision, betrays the conflict going on within him.*) But—Ruth—I—Uncle Dick—

RUTH. He won't mind when he knows it's for your happiness to stay. How could he? (*As* ROBERT *remains silent she bursts into sobs again.*) Oh, Rob! And you said—you loved me!

ROBERT. (*Conquered by this appeal—an irrevocable decision in his voice.*) I won't go, Ruth. I promise you. There! Don't cry! (*He presses her to him stroking her hair tenderly. After a pause he speaks with happy hopefulness.*) Perhaps after all Andy was right—righter than he knew—when he said I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm. I think love must have been the secret—the secret that called to me from over the world's rim—the secret beyond every horizon; and when I did not come it came to me. (*He clasps* RUTH *to him fiercely.*) Oh, Ruth, our love is sweeter than any distant dream! (*He kisses her passionately and steps to the ground lifting* RUTH *in his arms and carrying her to the road where he puts her down.*)

RUTH. (*With a happy laugh.*) My, but you're strong!

ROBERT. Come! We'll go and tell them at once.

RUTH. (*Dismayed.*) Oh, no, don't, Rob not 'til after I've gone. There'd be bound to be such a scene with them all together.

ROBERT. (*Kissing her—gaily.*) As you like—little Miss Common Sense!

RUTH. Let's go, then. (*She takes his hand, and they start to go off left.* ROBERT *suddenly stops and turns as though for a last look at the hills and the dying sunset flush.*)

ROBERT. (*Looking upward and pointing.*) See! The first star. (*He bends down and kisses her tenderly.*) *Our* star!

RUTH. (*In a soft murmur.*) Yes. Our very own star. (*They stand for a moment looking up at it, their arms around each other. Then* RUTH *takes his hand again and starts to lead him away.*) Come, Rob, let's go. (*His eyes are fixed again on the horizon as he half turns to follow her.* RUTH *urges.*) We'll be late for supper, Rob.

ROBERT. (*Shakes his head impatiently, as though he were throwing off some disturbing thought—with a laugh.*) All right. We'll run then. Come on! (*They run off laughing as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

ACT ONE

Scene Two

Scene. The sitting room of the Mayo farm house about nine o'clock the same night. On the left, two windows looking out on the fields. Against the wall between the windows, an old-fashioned walnut desk. In the left corner, rear, a sideboard with a mirror. In the rear wall to the right of the sideboard, a window looking out on the road. Next to the window a door leading out into the yard. Farther right, a black horsehair sofa, and another door opening on a bedroom. In the corner, a straight-backed chair. In the right wall, near the middle, an open doorway leading to the kitchen. Farther forward a double-heater stove with coal scuttle, etc. In the center of the newly carpeted floor, an oak dining-room table with a red cover. In the center of the table, a large oil reading lamp. Four chairs, three rockers with crocheted tidies on their backs, and one straight-backed, are placed about the table. The walls are papered a dark red with a scrolly-figured pattern.

Everything in the room is clean, well-kept, and in its exact place, yet there is no suggestion of primness about the whole. Rather the atmosphere is one of the orderly comfort of a simple, hard-earned prosperity, enjoyed and maintained by the family as a unit.

James Mayo, his wife, her brother, Captain Dick Scott, *and* Andrew *are discovered.* Mayo *is his son* Andrew *over again in body and face—an* Andrew *sixty-five years old with a short, square, white beard.* Mrs. Mayo *is a slight, round-faced, rather prim-looking woman of fifty-five who had once been a school teacher. The labors of a farmer's wife have bent but not broken her, and she retains a certain refinement of movement and expression foreign to the* Mayo part *of the family. Whatever of resemblance* Robert *has to his parents may be traced to her. Her brother, the* Captain, *is short and stocky, with a weather-beaten, jovial face and a white mustache—a typical old salt, loud of voice and given to gesture. He is fifty-eight years old.*

James Mayo *sits in front of the table. He wears spectacles, and a farm journal which he has been reading lies in his lap.* The Captain *leans forward from a chair in the rear, his hands on the table in front of him.* Andrew *is tilted back on the straight-backed chair to the left, his chin sunk forward on his chest, staring at the carpet, preoccupied and frowning.*

As the Curtain rises the Captain *is just finishing the relation of some sea episode. The others are pretending an interest which is belied by the absent-minded expressions on their faces.*

The Captain. (*Chuckling.*) And that mission woman, she hails me on the dock as I was acomin' ashore, and she says—with her silly face all screwed up serious as judgment—"Captain," she says, "would you be so kind as to tell me where the sea-gulls sleeps at night?" Blow me if them warn't her exact words! (*He slaps the table with the palm of his hands and laughs loudly. The others force smiles.*) Ain't that just like a fool woman's question? And I looks at her serious as I could, "Ma'm," says I, "I couldn't rightly answer that question. I ain't never seed a sea-gull in his bunk yet. The next time I hears one snorin'," I says, "I'll make a note of where he's turned in, and write you a letter 'bout it." And then she calls me a fool real spiteful and tacks away from me quick. (*He laughs again uproariously.*) So I got rid of her that way. (*The others smile but immediately relapse into expressions of gloom again.*)

Mrs. Mayo. (*Absent-mindedly—feeling that she has to say something.*) But when it comes to that, where *do* sea-gulls sleep, Dick?

Scott. (*Slapping the table.*) Ho! Ho! Listen to her, James. 'Nother one! Well, if that don't beat all hell—'scuse me for cussin', Kate.

Mayo. (*With a twinkle in his eyes.*) They unhitch their wings, Katey, and spreads 'em out on a wave for a bed.

Scott. And then they tells the fish to whistle to 'em when it's time to turn out. Ho! Ho!

Mrs. Mayo. (*With a forced smile.*) You men folks are too smart to live, aren't you? (*She resumes her knitting.* Mayo *pretends to read his paper;* Andrew *stares at the floor.*)

Scott. (*Looks from one to the other of them with a puzzled air. Finally he is*

unable to bear the thick silence a minute longer, and blurts out): You folks look as if you was settin' up with a corpse. (*With exaggerated concern.*) God A'mighty, there ain't anyone dead, be there?

MAYO. (*Sharply.*) Don't play the dunce, Dick! You know as well as we do there ain't no great cause to be feelin' chipper.

SCOTT. (*Argumentatively.*) And there ain't no cause to be wearin' mourning, either, I can make out.

MRS. MAYO. (*Indignantly.*) How can you talk that way, Dick Scott, when you're taking our Robbie away from us, in the middle of the night, you might say, just to get on that old boat of yours on time! I think you might wait until morning when he's had his breakfast.

SCOTT. (*Appealing to the others hopelessly.*) Ain't that a woman's way o' seein' things for you? God A'mighty, Kate, I can't give orders to the tide that it's got to be high just when it suits me to have it. I ain't gettin' no fun out o' missin' sleep and leavin' here at six bells myself. (*Protestingly.*) And the *Sunda* ain't an old ship—leastways, not very old—and she's good's she ever was.

MRS. MAYO. (*Her lips trembling.*) I wish Robbie weren't going.

MAYO. (*Looking at her over his glasses—consolingly.*) There, Katey!

MRS. MAYO. (*Rebelliously.*) Well, I *do* wish he wasn't!

SCOTT. You shouldn't be taking it so hard, 's far as I kin see. This vige'll make a man of him. I'll see to it he learns how to navigate, 'n' study for a mate's c'tificate right off—and it'll give him a trade for the rest of his life, if he wants to travel.

MRS. MAYO. But I don't want him to travel all his life. You've got to see he comes home when this trip is over. Then he'll be all well, and he'll want to—to marry—(ANDREW *sits forward in his chair with an abrupt movement*)—and settle down right here. (*She stares down at the knitting in her lap—after a pause.*) I never realized how hard it was going to be for me to have Robbie go—or I wouldn't have considered it a minute.

SCOTT. It ain't no good goin' on that way, Kate, now it's all settled.

MRS. MAYO. (*On the verge of tears.*) It's all right for *you* to talk. You've never had any children. You don't know what it means to be parted from them—and Robbie's my youngest, too. (ANDREW *frowns and fidgets in his chair.*)

ANDREW. (*Suddenly turning to them.*) There's one thing none of you seem to take into consideration—that Rob wants to go. He's dead set on it. He's been dreaming over this trip ever since it was first talked about. It wouldn't be fair to him not to have him go. (*A sudden uneasiness seems to strike him.*) At least, not if he still feels the same way about it he did when he was talking to me this evening.

MAYO. (*With an air of decision.*) Andy's right, Katey. That ends all argyment, you can see that. (*Looking at his big silver watch.*) Wonder what's happened to Robert? He's been gone long enough to wheel the widder to home certain. He can't be out dreamin' at the stars his last night.

MRS. MAYO. (*A bit reproachfully.*) Why didn't you wheel Mrs. Atkins back tonight, Andy? You usually do when she and Ruth come over.

ANDREW. (*Avoiding her eyes.*) I thought maybe Robert wanted to tonight. He offered to go right away when they were leaving.

MRS. MAYO. He only wanted to be polite.

ANDREW. (*Gets to his feet.*) Well, he'll be right back, I guess. (*He turns to his father.*) Guess I'll go take a look at the black cow, Pa—see if she's ailing any.

MAYO. Yes—better had, son. (ANDREW *goes into the kitchen on the right.*)

SCOTT. (*As he goes out—in a low tone.*) There's the boy that would make a good strong sea-farin' man—if he'd a mind to.

MAYO. (*Sharply.*) Don't you put no such fool notions in Andy's head, Dick—or you 'n' me's goin' to fall out. (*Then he smiles.*) You couldn't tempt him, no ways. Andy's a Mayo bred in the bone and he's a born farmer, and a damn good one, too. He'll live and die right here on this farm, like I expect to. (*With proud confidence.*) And he'll make this one of the slickest, best-payin' farms in the state, too, afore he gits through!

SCOTT. Seems to me it's a pretty slick place right now.

MAYO. (*Shaking his head.*) It's too small. We need more land to make the amount to much, and we ain't got the

apital to buy it. (ANDREW *enters from he kitchen. His hat is on, and he carries a lighted lantern in his hand. He goes to the door in the rear leading out.*)
NDREW. (*Opens the door and pauses.*) Anything else you can think of to be done, Pa?
AYO. No, nothin' I know of. (ANDREW *goes out, shutting the door.*)
RS. MAYO. (*After a pause.*) What's come over Andy tonight, I wonder? He acts so strange.
AYO. He does seem sort o' glum and out of sorts. It's 'count o' Robert leavin', I s'pose. (*To* SCOTT.) Dick, you wouldn't believe how them boys o' mine sticks together. They ain't like most brothers. They've been thick as thieves all their lives, with nary a quarrel I kin remember.
COTT. No need to tell me that. I can see how they take to each other.
IRS. MAYO. (*Pursuing her train of thought.*) Did you notice, James, how queer everyone was at supper? Robert seemed stirred up about something; and Ruth was so flustered and giggly; and Andy sat there dumb, looking as if he'd lost his best friend; and all of them only nibbled at their food.
AYO. Guess they was all thinkin' about tomorrow, same as us.
IRS. MAYO. (*Shaking her head.*) No. I'm afraid somethin's happened—somethin' else.
AYO. You mean—'bout Ruth?
IRS. MAYO. Yes.
AYO. (*After a pause—frowning.*) I hope her and Andy ain't had a serious fallin'-out. I always sorter hoped they'd hitch up together sooner or later. What d'you say, Dick? Don't you think them two'd pair up well?
COTT. (*Nodding his head approvingly.*) A sweet, wholesome couple they'd make.
AYO. It'd be a good thing for Andy in more ways than one. I ain't what you'd call calculatin' generally, and I b'lieve in lettin' young folks run their affairs to suit themselves; but there's advantages for both o' them in this match you can't overlook in reason. The Atkins farm is right next to ourn. Jined together they'd make a jim-dandy of a place, with plenty o' room to work in. And bein' a widder with only a daughter, and laid up all the time to boot, Mrs. Atkins can't do nothin' with the place as it ought to be done. She needs a man, a first-class farmer, to take hold o' things; and Andy's just the one.

MRS. MAYO. (*Abruptly.*) I don't think Ruth loves Andy.

MAYO. You don't? Well, maybe a woman's eyes is sharper in such things, but—they're always together. And if she don't love him now, she'll likely come around to it in time. (*As* MRS. MAYO *shakes her head.*) You seem mighty fixed in your opinion, Katey. How d'you know?

MRS. MAYO. It's just—what I feel.

MAYO. (*A light breaking over him.*) You don't mean to say— (MRS. MAYO *nods.* MAYO *chuckles scornfully.*) Shucks! I'm losin' my respect for your eyesight, Katey. Why, Robert ain't got no time for Ruth, 'cept as a friend!

MRS. MAYO. (*Warningly.*) Sss-h-h! (*The door from the yard opens, and* ROBERT *enters. He is smiling happily, and humming a song to himself, but as he comes into the room an undercurrent of nervous uneasiness manifests itself in his bearing.*)

MAYO. So here you be at last! (ROBERT *comes forward and sits on* ANDY'S *chair.* MAYO *smiles slyly at his wife.*) What have you been doin' all this time—countin' the stars to see if they all come out right and proper?

ROBERT. There's only one I'll ever look for any more, Pa.

MAYO. (*Reproachfully.*) You might've even not wasted time lookin' for that one—your last night.

MRS. MAYO. (*As if she were speaking to a child.*) You ought to have worn your coat a sharp night like this, Robbie.

SCOTT. (*Disgustedly.*) God A'mighty, Kate, you treat Robert as if he was one year old!

MRS. MAYO. (*Notices* ROBERT'S *nervous uneasiness.*) You look all worked up over something, Robbie. What is it?

ROBERT. (*Swallowing hard, looks quickly from one to the other of them—then begins determinedly.*) Yes, there *is* something—something I must tell you—all of you. (*As he begins to talk* ANDREW *enters quietly from the rear, closing the door behind him, and setting the lighted lantern on the floor. He remains standing by the door, his arms folded, listening to* ROBERT *with a repressed expression of pain on his face.* ROBERT *is so much taken up with what he is going to say that he does not notice* ANDREW'S

presence.) Something I discovered only this evening—very beautiful and wonderful—something I did not take into consideration previously because I hadn't dared to hope that such happiness could ever come to me. (*Appealingly.*) You must all remember that fact, won't you?

MAYO. (*Frowning.*) Let's get to the point, son.

ROBERT. (*With a trace of defiance.*) Well, the point is this, Pa: I'm not going—I mean—I can't go tomorrow with Uncle Dick—or at any future time, either.

MRS. MAYO. (*With a sharp sigh of joyful relief.*) Oh, Robbie, I'm so glad!

MAYO. (*Astounded.*) You ain't serious, be you, Robert? (*Severely.*) Seems to me it's a pretty late hour in the day for you to be upsettin' all your plans so sudden!

ROBERT. I asked you to remember that until this evening I didn't know myself. I had never dared to dream—

MAYO. (*Irritably.*) What is this foolishness you're talkin' of?

ROBERT. (*Flushing.*) Ruth told me this evening that—she loved me. It was after I'd confessed I loved her. I told her I hadn't been conscious of my love until after the trip had been arranged, and I realized that it would mean—leaving her. That was the truth. I *didn't* know until then. (*As if justifying himself to the others.*) I hadn't intended telling her anything but—suddenly—I felt I must. I didn't think it would matter, because I was going away. And I thought she loved—someone else. (*Slowly—his eyes shining.*) And then she cried and said it was I she'd loved all the time, but I hadn't seen it.

MRS. MAYO. (*Rushes over and throws her arms about him.*) I knew it! I was just telling your father when you came in—and, oh, Robbie, I'm so happy you're not going!

ROBERT. (*Kissing her.*) I knew you'd be glad, Ma.

MAYO. (*Bewilderedly.*) Well, I'll be damned! You do beat all for gettin' folks' minds all tangled up, Robert. And Ruth too! Whatever got into her of a sudden? Why, I was thinkin'—

MRS. MAYO. (*Hurriedly—in a tone of warning.*) Never mind what you were thinking, James. It wouldn't be any use telling us that now. (*Meaningly.*) And what you were hoping for turns out just the same almost, doesn't it?

MAYO. (*Thoughtfully—beginning to see this side of the argument.*) Yes; I suppose you're right, Katey. (*Scratching his head in puzzlement.*) But how it ever came about! It do beat anything ever I heard. (*Finally he gets up with a sheepish grin and walks over to* ROBERT.) We're glad you ain't goin', your Ma and I, for we'd have missed you terrible, that's certain and sure; and we're glad you've found happiness. Ruth's a fine girl and'll make a good wife to you.

ROBERT. (*Much moved.*) Thank you, Pa. (*He grips his father's hand in his.*)

ANDREW. (*His face tense and drawn comes forward and holds out his hand forcing a smile.*) I guess it's my turn to offer congratulations, isn't it?

ROBERT. (*With a startled cry when his brother appears before him so suddenly.*) Andy! (*Confused.*) Why—I—I didn't see you. Were you here when—

ANDREW. I heard everything you said; and here's wishing you every happiness you and Ruth. You both deserve the best there is.

ROBERT. (*Taking his hand.*) Thanks, Andy, it's fine of you to— (*His voice dies away as he sees the pain in* ANDREW'S *eyes.*)

ANDREW. (*Giving his brother's hand a final grip.*) Good luck to you both! (*He turns away and goes back to the rear where he bends over the lantern fumbling with it to hide his emotion from the others.*)

MRS. MAYO. (*To the* CAPTAIN, *who has been too flabbergasted by* ROBERT'S *decision to say a word.*) What's the matter, Dick? Aren't you going to congratulate Robbie?

SCOTT. (*Embarrassed*). Of course I be. (*He gets to his feet and shakes* ROBERT'S *hand, muttering a vague*) Luck to you, boy. (*He stands beside* ROBERT *as if he wanted to say something more but doesn't know how to go about it.*)

ROBERT. Thanks, Uncle Dick.

SCOTT. So you're not acomin' on the *Sunda* with me? (*His voice indicates disbelief.*)

ROBERT. I can't, Uncle—not now. I wouldn't miss it for anything else in the world under any other circumstances. (*He sighs unconsciously.*) But you see I've found—a bigger dream. (*Then*

with joyous high spirits.) I want you all to understand one thing—I'm not going to be a loafer on your hands any longer. This means the beginning of a new life for me in every way. I'm going to settle right down and take a real interest in the farm, and do my share. I'll prove to you, Pa, that I'm as good a Mayo as you are—or Andy, when I want to be.

MAYO. (*Kindly, but skeptically.*) That's the right spirit, Robert. Ain't none of us doubts your willin'ness, but you ain't never learned—

ROBERT. Then I'm going to start learning right away, and you'll teach me, won't you?

MAYO. (*Mollifyingly.*) Of course I will, boy, and be glad to, only you'd best go easy at first.

SCOTT. (*Who has listened to this conversation in mingled consternation and amazement.*) You don't mean to tell me you're goin' to let him stay, do you, James?

MAYO. Why, things bein' as they be, Robert's free to do as he's a mind to.

MRS. MAYO. *Let him!* The very idea!

SCOTT. (*More and more ruffled.*) Then all I got to say is, you're a soft, weak-willed critter to be permittin' a boy—and women, too—to be layin' your course for you wherever they damn pleases.

MAYO. (*Slyly amused.*) It's just the same with me as 'twas with you, Dick. You can't order the tides on the seas to suit you, and I ain't pretendin' I can reg'late love for young folks.

SCOTT. (*Scornfully.*) Love! They ain't old enough to know love when they sight it! Love! I'm ashamed of you, Robert, to go lettin' a little huggin' and kissin' in the dark spile your chances to make a man out o' yourself. It ain't common sense—no siree, it ain't—not by a hell of a sight! (*He pounds the table with his fists in exasperation.*)

MRS. MAYO. (*Laughing provokingly at her brother.*) A fine one you are to be talking about love, Dick—an old cranky bachelor like you. Goodness sakes!

SCOTT. (*Exasperated by their joking.*) I've never been a damn fool like most, if that's what you're steerin' at.

MRS. MAYO. (*Tauntingly.*) Sour grapes, aren't they, Dick? (*She laughs.* ROBERT *and his father chuckle.* SCOTT *sputters with annoyance.*) Good gracious, Dick, you do act silly, flying into a temper over nothing.

SCOTT. (*Indignantly.*) Nothin'! You talk as if I wasn't concerned nohow in this here business. Seems to me I've got a right to have my say. Ain't I made all arrangements with the owners and stocked up some special grub all on Robert's account?

ROBERT. You've been fine, Uncle Dick; and I appreciate it. Truly.

MAYO. 'Course; we all does, Dick.

SCOTT. (*Unplacated.*) I've been countin' sure on havin' Robert for company on this vige—to sorta talk to and show things to, and teach, kinda, and I got my mind so set on havin' him I'm goin' to be double lonesome this vige. (*He pounds on the table, attempting to cover up this confession of weakness.*) Darn all this silly lovin' business, anyway. (*Irritably.*) But all this talk ain't tellin' me what I'm to do with that sta'b'd cabin I fixed up. It's all painted white, an' a bran new mattress on the bunk, 'n' new sheets 'n' blankets 'n' things. And Chips built in a book-case so's Robert could take his books along—with a slidin' bar fixed across't it, mind, so's they couldn't fall out no matter how she rolled. (*With excited consternation.*) What d'you suppose my officers is goin' to think when there's no one comes aboard to occupy that sta'b'd cabin? And the men what did the work on it—what'll *they* think? (*He shakes his finger indignantly.*) They're liable as not to suspicion it was a *woman* I'd planned to ship along, and that she gave me the go-by at the last moment! (*He wipes his perspiring brow in anguish at this thought.*) Gawd A'mighty! They're only lookin' to have the laugh on me for something like that. They're liable to b'lieve anything, those fellers is!

MAYO. (*With a wink.*) Then there's nothing to it but for you to get right out and hunt up a wife somewheres for that spic 'n' span cabin. She'll have to be a pretty one, too, to match it. (*He looks at his watch with exaggerated concern.*) You ain't got much time to find her, Dick.

SCOTT. (*As the others smile—sulkily.*) You kin go to thunder, Jim Mayo!

ANDREW. (*Comes forward from where he has been standing by the door, rear, brooding. His face is set in a look of grim determination.*) You needn't worry about that spare cabin, Uncle Dick,

if you've a mind to take me in Robert's place.

ROBERT. (*Turning to him quickly.*) Andy! (*He sees at once the fixed resolve in his brother's eyes, and realizes immediately the reason for it—in consternation.*) Andy, you mustn't!

ANDREW. You've made your decision, Rob, and now I've made mine. You're out of this, remember.

ROBERT. (*Hurt by his brother's tone.*) But Andy—

ANDREW. Don't interfere, Rob—that's all I ask. (*Turning to his uncle.*) You haven't answered my question, Uncle Dick.

SCOTT. (*Clearing his throat, with an uneasy side glance at* JAMES MAYO *who is staring at his elder son as if he thought he had suddenly gone mad.*) O' course, I'd be glad to have you, Andy.

ANDREW. It's settled then. I can pack the little I want to take in a few minutes.

MRS. MAYO. Don't be a fool, Dick. Andy's only joking you.

SCOTT. (*Disgruntedly.*) It's hard to tell who's jokin' and who's not in this house.

ANDREW. (*Firmly.*) I'm not joking, Uncle Dick. (*As* SCOTT *looks at him uncertainly.*) You needn't be afraid I'll go back on my word.

ROBERT. (*Hurt by the insinuation he feels in* ANDREW'S *tone.*) Andy! That isn't fair!

MAYO. (*Frowning.*) Seems to me this ain't no subject to joke over—not for Andy.

ANDREW. (*Facing his father.*) I agree with you, Pa, and I tell you again, once and for all, that I've made up my mind to go.

MAYO. (*Dumbfounded—unable to doubt the determination in* ANDREW'S *voice—helplessly.*) But why, son? Why?

ANDREW. (*Evasively.*) I've always wanted to go.

ROBERT. Andy!

ANDREW. (*Half angrily.*) You shut up, Rob! (*Turning to his father again.*) I didn't ever mention it because as long as Rob was going I knew it was no use; but now Rob's staying on here, there isn't any reason for me not to go.

MAYO. (*Breathing hard.*) No reason? Can you stand there and say that to me, Andrew?

MRS. MAYO. (*Hastily—seeing the gathering storm.*) He doesn't mean a word of it, James.

MAYO. (*Making a gesture to her to keep silence.*) Let me talk, Katey. (*In a more kindly tone.*) What's come over you so sudden, Andy? You know's well as I do that it wouldn't be fair o' you to run off at a moment's notice right now when we're up to our necks in hard work

ANDREW. (*Avoiding his eyes.*) Rob'll hold his end up as soon as he learns.

MAYO. Robert was never cut out for a farmer, and you was.

ANDREW. You can easily get a man to do my work.

MAYO. (*Restraining his anger with an effort.*) It sounds strange to hear you, Andy, that I always thought had good sense, talkin' crazy like that. (*Scornfully.*) Get a man to take your place! You ain't been workin' here for no hire, Andy, that you kin give me your notice to quit like you've done. The farm is your'n as well as mine. You've always worked on it with that understanding; and what you're sayin' you intend doing is just skulkin' out o' your rightful responsibility.

ANDREW. (*Looking at the floor—simply.*) I'm sorry, Pa. (*After a slight pause.*) It's no use talking any more about it.

MRS. MAYO. (*In relief.*) There! I knew Andy'd come to his senses!

ANDREW. Don't get the wrong idea, Ma. I'm not backing out.

MAYO. You mean you're goin' in spite of —everythin'?

ANDREW. Yes. I'm going. I've got to. (*He looks at his father defiantly.*) I feel I oughtn't to miss this chance to get out into the world and see things, and—I want to go.

MAYO. (*With bitter scorn.*) So—you want to go out into the world and see thin's! (*His voice raised and quivering with anger.*) I never thought I'd live to see the day when a son o' mine'd look me in the face and tell a bare-faced lie! (*Bursting out.*) You're a liar, Andy Mayo, and a mean one to boot!

MRS. MAYO. James!

ROBERT. Pa!

SCOTT. Steady there, Jim!

MAYO. (*Waving their protests aside.*) He is and he knows it.

ANDREW. (*His face flushed.*) I won't argue with you, Pa. You can think as badly of me as you like.

MAYO. (*Shaking his finger at* ANDY, *in cold rage.*) You know I'm speakin' truth—that's why you're afraid to argy

You lie when you say you want to go away—and see thin's! You ain't got no likin' in the world to go. I've watched you grow up, and I know your ways, and they're my ways. You're runnin' against your own nature, and you're goin' to be a'mighty sorry for it if you do. 'S if I didn't know your real reason for runnin' away! And runnin' away's the only word to fit it. You're runnin' away 'cause you're put out and riled 'cause your own brother's got Ruth 'stead o' you, and—

ANDREW. (*His face crimson—tensely.*) Stop, Pa! I won't stand hearing that—not even from you!

MRS. MAYO. (*Rushing to* ANDY *and putting her arms about him protectingly.*) Don't mind him, Andy dear. He don't mean a word he's saying! (ROBERT *stands rigid, his hands clenched, his face contracted by pain.* SCOTT *sits dumbfounded and open-mouthed.* ANDREW *soothes his mother who is on the verge of tears.*)

MAYO. (*In angry triumph.*) It's the truth, Andy Mayo! And you ought to be bowed in shame to think of it!

ROBERT. (*Protestingly.*) Pa!

MRS. MAYO. (*Coming from* ANDREW *to his father; puts her hands on his shoulders as though to try and push him back in the chair from which he has risen.*) Won't you be still, James? Please won't you?

MAYO. (*Looking at* ANDREW *over his wife's shoulder—stubbornly.*) The truth—God's truth!

MRS. MAYO. Sh-h-h! (*She tries to put a finger across his lips, but he twists his head away.*)

ANDREW. (*Who has regained control over himself.*) You're wrong, Pa, it isn't truth. (*With defiant assertiveness.*) I don't love Ruth. I never loved her, and the thought of such a thing never entered my head.

MAYO. (*With an angry snort of disbelief.*) Hump! You're pilin' lie on lie!

ANDREW. (*Losing his temper—bitterly.*) I suppose it'd be hard for you to explain anyone's wanting to leave this blessed farm except for some outside reason like that. But I'm sick and tired of it—whether you want to believe me or not—and that's why I'm glad to get a chance to move on.

ROBERT. Andy! Don't! You're only making it worse.

ANDREW. (*Sulkily.*) I don't care. I've done my share of work here. I've earned my right to quit when I want to. (*Suddenly overcome with anger and grief; with rising intensity.*) I'm sick and tired of the whole damn business. I hate the farm and every inch of ground in it. I'm sick of digging in the dirt and sweating in the sun like a slave without getting a word of thanks for it. (*Tears of rage starting to his eyes—hoarsely.*) I'm through, through for good and all; and if Uncle Dick won't take me on his ship, I'll find another. I'll get away somewhere, somehow.

MRS. MAYO. (*In a frightened voice.*) Don't you answer him, James. He doesn't know what he's saying. Don't say a word to him 'til he's in his right senses again. Please James, don't—

MAYO. (*Pushes her away from him; his face is drawn and pale with the violence of his passion. He glares at* ANDREW *as if he hated him.*) You dare to—you dare to speak like that to me? You talk like that about this farm—the Mayo farm—where you was born—you—you— (*He clenches his fist above his head and advances threateningly on* ANDREW.) You damned whelp!

MRS. MAYO. (*With a shriek.*) James! (*She covers her face with her hands and sinks weakly into* MAYO'S *chair.* ANDREW *remains standing motionless, his face pale and set.*)

SCOTT. (*Starting to his feet and stretching his arms across the table toward* MAYO.) Easy there, Jim!

ROBERT. (*Throwing himself between father and brother.*) Stop! Are you mad?

MAYO. (*Grabs* ROBERT'S *arm and pushes him aside—then stands for a moment gasping for breath before* ANDREW. *He points to the door with a shaking finger.*) Yes—go!—go!— You're no son o' mine—no son o' mine! You can go to hell if you want to! Don't let me find you here—in the mornin'—or—or—I'll *throw* you out!

ROBERT. Pa! For God's sake!

(MRS. MAYO *bursts into noisy sobbing.*)

MAYO. (*He gulps convulsively and glares at* ANDREW.) You go—tomorrow mornin'—and by God—don't come back—don't dare come back—by God, not while I'm livin'—or I'll—I'll— (*He shakes over his muttered threat and strides toward the door rear, right.*)

MRS. MAYO. (*Rising and throwing her*

arms around him—hysterically.) James! James! Where are you going?

MAYO. (*Incoherently.*) I'm goin'—to bed, Katey. It's late, Katey—it's late. (*He goes out.*)

MRS. MAYO. (*Following him, pleading hysterically.*) James! Take back what you've said to Andy. James! (*She follows him out.* ROBERT *and the* CAPTAIN *stare after them with horrified eyes.* ANDREW *stands rigid, looking straight in front of him, his fists clenched at his sides.*)

SCOTT. (*The first to find his voice—with an explosive sigh.*) Well, if he ain't the devil himself when he's roused! You oughtn't to have talked to him that way, Andy 'bout the damn farm, knowin' how touchy he is about it. (*With another sigh.*) Well, you won't mind what he's said in anger. He'll be sorry for it when he's calmed down a bit.

ANDREW. (*In a dead voice.*) You don't know him. (*Defiantly.*) What's said is said and can't be unsaid; and I've chosen.

ROBERT. (*With violent protest.*) Andy! You can't go! This is all so stupid—and terrible!

ANDREW. (*Coldly.*) I'll talk to you in a minute, Rob. (*Crushed by his brother's attitude* ROBERT *sinks down into a chair, holding his head in his hands.*)

SCOTT. (*Comes and slaps* ANDREW *on the back.*) I'm damned glad you're shippin' on, Andy. I like your spirit, and the way you spoke up to him. (*Lowering his voice to a cautious whisper.*) The sea's the place for a young feller like you that isn't half dead 'n' alive. (*He gives* ANDY *a final approving slap.*) You 'n' me'll get along like twins, see if we don't. I'm goin' aloft to turn in. Don't forget to pack your dunnage. And git some sleep, if you kin. We'll want to sneak out extra early b'fore they're up. It'll do away with more argyments. Robert can drive us down to the town, and bring back the team. (*He goes to the door in the rear, left.*) Well, good night!

ANDREW. Good night. (SCOTT *goes out. The two brothers remain silent for a moment. Then* ANDREW *comes over to his brother and puts a hand on his back. He speaks in a low voice, full of feeling.*) Buck up, Rob. It ain't any use crying over spilt milk; and it'll all turn out for the best—let's hope. It couldn't be helped—what's happened,

ROBERT. (*Wildly.*) But it's a lie, And a lie!

ANDREW. Of course it's a lie. You kno it and I know it,—but that's all oug to know it.

ROBERT. Pa'll never forgive you. Oh, t whole affair is so senseless—and tragi Why did you think you must go away

ANDREW. You know better than to as that. You know why. (*Fiercely.*) can wish you and Ruth all the good lu in the world, and I do, and I mean i but you can't expect me to stay arou here and watch you two together, d after day—and me alone. I couldn stand it—not after all the plans I'd ma to happen on this place thinking (*His voice breaks*) thinking she car for me.

ROBERT. (*Putting a hand on his brothe arm.*) God! It's horrible! I feel guilty—to think that I should be t cause of your suffering, after we'd be such pals all our lives. If I could ha foreseen what'd happen, I swear to y I'd have never said a word to Ruth. swear I wouldn't have, Andy!

ANDREW. I know you wouldn't; and t would've been worse, for Ruth would suffered then. (*He pats his brothe shoulder.*) It's best as it is. It had be, and I've got to stand the gaff, tha all. Pa'll see how I felt—after a tim (*As* ROBERT *shakes his head*)—and he don't—well, it can't be helped.

ROBERT. But think of Ma! God, And you can't go! You can't!

ANDREW. (*Fiercely.*) I've got to go— get away! I've got to, I tell you. go crazy here, bein' reminded every s ond of the day what a fool I'd made myself. I've got to get away and t and forget, if I can. And I'd hate t farm if I stayed, hate it for bring things back. I couldn't take interest the work any more, work with no pu pose in sight. Can't you see what a l it'd be? You love her too, Rob. H yourself in my place, and remember haven't stopped loving her, and could if I was to stay. Would that be fair you or to her? Put yourself in place. (*He shakes his brother fierc by the shoulder.*) What'd you do th Tell me the truth! You love h What'd you do?

ROBERT. (*Chokingly.*) I'd—I'd go, And (*He buries his face in his hands wit shuddering sob.*) God!

NDREW. (*Seeming to relax suddenly all over his body—in a low, steady voice.*) Then you know why I got to go; and there's nothing more to be said.

OBERT. (*In a frenzy of rebellion.*) Why did this have to happen to us? It's damnable! (*He looks about him wildly, as if his vengeance were seeking the responsible fate.*)

NDREW. (*Soothingly—again putting his hands on his brother's shoulder.*) It's no use fussing any more, Rob. It's done. (*Forcing a smile.*) I guess Ruth's got a right to have who she likes. She made a good choice—and God bless her for it!

OBERT. Andy! Oh, I wish I could tell half I feel of how fine you are!

NDREW. (*Interrupting him quickly.*) Shut up! Let's go to bed. I've got to be up long before sun-up. You, too, if you're going to drive us down.

OBERT. Yes. Yes.

NDREW. (*Turning down the lamp.*) And I've got to pack yet. (*He yawns with utter weariness.*) I'm as tired as if I'd been plowing twenty-four hours at a stretch. (*Dully.*) I feel—dead. (ROBERT *covers his face again with his hands.* ANDREW *shakes his head as if to get rid of his thoughts, and continues with a poor attempt at cheery briskness.*) I'm going to douse the light. Come on. (*He slaps his brother on the back.* ROBERT *does not move.* ANDREW *bends over and blows out the lamp. His voice comes from the darkness.*) Don't sit there mourning, Rob. It'll all come out in the wash. Come on and get some sleep. Everything'll turn out all right in the end. (ROBERT *can be heard stumbling to his feet, and the dark figures of the two brothers can be seen groping their way toward the doorway in the rear as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

SCENE. *Same as Act One, Scene Two. Sitting room of the farm house about half past twelve in the afternoon of a hot, sun-baked day in mid-summer, three years later. All the windows are open, but no breeze stirs the soiled white curtains. A patched screen door is in the rear. Through it the yard can be seen, its small stretch of lawn divided by the dirt path leading to the door from the gate in the white picket fence which borders the road.*

The room has changed, not so much in its outward appearance as in its general atmosphere. Little significant details give evidence of carelessness, of inefficiency, of an industry gone to seed. The chairs appear shabby from lack of paint; the table cover is spotted and askew; holes show in the curtains; a child's doll, with one arm gone, lies under the table; a hoe stands in a corner; a man's coat is flung on the couch in the rear; the desk is cluttered up with odds and ends; a number of books are piled carelessly on the sideboard. The noon enervation of the sultry, scorching day seems to have penetrated indoors, causing even inanimate objects to wear an aspect of despondent exhaustion.

A place is set at the end of the table, left for someone's dinner. Through the open door to the kitchen comes the clatter of dishes being washed, interrupted at intervals by a woman's irritated voice and the peevish whining of a child.

At the rise of the curtain MRS. MAYO *and* MRS. ATKINS *are discovered sitting facing each other,* MRS. MAYO *to the rear,* MRS. ATKINS *to the right of the table.* MRS. MAYO'S *face has lost all character, disintegrated, become a weak mask wearing a helpless, doleful expression of being constantly on the verge of comfortless tears. She speaks in an uncertain voice, without assertiveness, as if all power of willing had deserted her.* MRS. ATKINS *is in her wheel chair. She is a thin, pale-faced, unintelligent looking woman of about forty-eight, with hard, bright eyes. A victim of partial paralysis for many years, condemned to be pushed from day to day of her life in a wheel chair, she has developed the selfish, irritable nature of the chronic invalid. Both women are dressed in black.* MRS. ATKINS *knits nervously as she talks. A ball of unused yarn, with needles stuck through it, lies on the table before* MRS. MAYO.

MRS. ATKINS. (*With a disapproving glance at the place set on the table.*) Robert's late for his dinner again, as usual. I don't see why Ruth puts up with it, and I've told her so. Many's

the time I've said to her, "It's about time you put a stop to his nonsense. Does he suppose you're runnin' a hotel —with no one to help with things?" But she don't pay no attention. She's as bad as he is, a'most—thinks she knows better than an old, sick body like me.

MRS. MAYO. (*Dully.*) Robbie's always late for things. He can't help it, Sarah.

MRS. ATKINS. (*With a snort.*) Can't help it! How you do go on, Kate, findin' excuses for him! Anybody can help anything they've a mind to—as long as they've got health, and ain't rendered helpless like me— (*She adds as a pious afterthought*)—through the will of God.

MRS. MAYO. Robbie can't.

MRS. ATKINS. Can't! It do make me mad, Kate Mayo, to see folks that God gave all the use of their limbs to, potterin' round and wastin' time doin' everything the wrong way—and me powerless to help and at their mercy, you might say. And it ain't that I haven't pointed the right way to 'em. I've talked to Robert thousands of times and told him how things ought to be done. You know that, Kate Mayo. But d'you s'pose he takes any notice of what I say? Or Ruth, either—my own daughter? No, they think I'm a crazy, cranky old woman, half dead a'ready, and the sooner I'm in the grave and out o' their way the better it'd suit them.

MRS. MAYO. You mustn't talk that way, Sarah. They're not as wicked as that. And you've got years and years before you.

MRS. ATKINS. You're like the rest, Kate. You don't know how near the end I am. Well, at least I can go to my eternal rest with a clear conscience. I've done all a body could do to avert ruin from this house. On their heads be it!

MRS. MAYO. (*With hopeless indifference.*) Things might be worse. Robert never had any experience in farming. You can't expect him to learn in a day.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Snappily.*) He's had three years to learn, and he's gettin' worse 'stead of better. Not on'y your place but mine too is driftin' to rack and ruin, and I can't do nothin' to prevent.

MRS. MAYO. (*With a spark of assertiveness.*) You can't say but Robbie works hard, Sarah.

MRS. ATKINS. What good's workin' hard if it don't accomplish anythin', I'd like know?

MRS. MAYO. Robbie's had bad luck again him.

MRS. ATKINS. Say what you've a mi to, Kate, the proof of the puddin's the eatin'; and you can't deny th things have been goin' from bad worse ever since your husband died tw years back.

MRS. MAYO. (*Wiping tears from her e with her handkerchief.*) It was Go will that he should be taken.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Triumphantly.*) It w God's punishment on James Mayo f the blasphemin' and denyin' of G he done all his sinful life! (MRS. MA *begins to weep softly.*) There, Kate, shouldn't be remindin' you, I kno He's at peace, poor man, and forgive let's pray.

MRS. MAYO. (*Wiping her eyes—simply* James was a good man.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Ignoring this remark* What I was sayin' was that since Ro ert's been in charge things've been goi down hill steady. You don't know h bad they are. Robert don't let on you what's happenin'; and you'd nev see it yourself if 'twas under your nos But, thank the Lord, Ruth still com to me once in a while for advice wh she's worried near out of her senses h his goin's-on. Do you know what s told me last night? But I forgot, s said not to tell you—still I think you' got a right to know, and it's my du not to let such things go on behind yo back.

MRS. MAYO. (*Wearily.*) You can tell m if you want to.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Bending over toward h —in a low voice.*) Ruth was almo crazy about it. Robert told her he have to mortgage the farm—said h didn't know how he'd pull through 'f harvest without it, and he can't g money any other way. (*She straighte up—indignantly.*) Now what do y think of your Robert?

MRS. MAYO. (*Resignedly.*) If it has be—

MRS. ATKINS. You don't mean to sa you're goin' to sign away your far Kate Mayo—after me warnin' you?

MRS. MAYO. I'll do what Robbie says needful.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Holding up her hands.* Well, of all the foolishness!—well, it

your farm, not mine, and I've nothin' more to say.

MRS. MAYO. Maybe Robbie'll manage till Andy gets back and sees to things. It can't be long now.

MRS. ATKINS. (*With keen interest.*) Ruth says Andy ought to turn up any day. When does Robert figger he'll get here?

MRS. MAYO. He says he can't calculate exactly on account o' the *Sunda* being a sail boat. Last letter he got was from England, the day they were sailing for home. That was over a month ago, and Robbie thinks they're overdue now.

MRS. ATKINS. We can give praise to God then that he'll be back in the nick o' time. He ought to be tired of travelin' and anxious to get home and settle down to work again.

MRS. MAYO. Andy *has* been working. He's head officer on Dick's boat, he wrote Robbie. You know that.

MRS. ATKINS. That foolin' on ships is all right for a spell, but he must be right sick of it by this.

MRS. MAYO. (*Musingly.*) I wonder if he's changed much. He used to be so fine-looking and strong. (*With a sigh.*) Three years! It seems more like three hundred. (*Her eyes filling—piteously.*) Oh, if James could only have lived 'til he came back—and forgiven him!

MRS. ATKINS. He never would have—not James Mayo! Didn't he keep his heart hardened against him till the last in spite of all you and Robert did to soften him?

MRS. MAYO. (*With a feeble flash of anger.*) Don't you dare say that! (*Brokenly.*) Oh, I know deep down in his heart he forgave Andy, though he was too stubborn ever to own up to it. It was that brought on his death—breaking his heart just on account of his stubborn pride. (*She wipes her eyes with her handkerchief and sobs.*)

MRS. ATKINS. (*Piously.*) It was the will of God. (*The whining crying of the child sounds from the kitchen.* MRS. ATKINS *frowns irritably.*) Drat that young one! Seems as if she cries all the time on purpose to set a body's nerves on edge.

MRS. MAYO. (*Wiping her eyes.*) It's the heat upsets her. Mary doesn't feel any too well these days, poor little child!

MRS. ATKINS. She gets it right from her Pa—bein' sickly all the time. You can't deny Robert was always ailin' as a child. (*She sighs heavily.*) It was a crazy mistake for them two to get married. I argyed against it at the time, but Ruth was so spelled with Robert's wild poetry notions she wouldn't listen to sense. Andy was the one would have been the match for her.

MRS. MAYO. I've often thought since it might have been better the other way. But Ruth and Robbie seems happy enough together.

MRS. ATKINS. At any rate it was God's work—and His will be done. (*The two women sit in silence for a moment.* RUTH *enters from the kitchen, carrying in her arms her two-year-old daughter,* MARY, *a pretty but sickly and anæmic looking child with a tear-stained face.* RUTH *has aged appreciably. Her face has lost its youth and freshness. There is a trace in her expression of something hard and spiteful. She sits in the rocker in front of the table and sighs wearily. She wears a gingham dress with a soiled apron tied around her waist.*)

RUTH. Land sakes, if this isn't a scorcher! That kitchen's like a furnace. Phew! (*She pushes the damp hair back from her forehead.*)

MRS. MAYO. Why didn't you call me to help with the dishes?

RUTH. (*Shortly.*) No. The heat in there'd kill you.

MARY. (*Sees the doll under the table and struggles on her mother's lap.*) Dolly, Mamma! Dolly!

RUTH. (*Pulling her back.*) It's time for your nap. You can't play with Dolly now.

MARY. (*Commencing to cry whiningly.*) Dolly!

MRS. ATKINS. (*Irritably.*) Can't you keep that child still? Her racket's enough to split a body's ears Put her down and let her play with the doll if it'll quiet her.

RUTH. (*Lifting* MARY *to the floor.*) There! I hope you'll be satisfied and keep still. (MARY *sits down on the floor before the table and plays with the doll in silence.* RUTH *glances at the place set on the table.*) It's a wonder Rob wouldn't try to get to meals on time once in a while.

MRS. MAYO. (*Dully.*) Something must have gone wrong again.

RUTH. (*Wearily.*) I s'pose so. Some-

thing's always going wrong these days, it looks like.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Snappily.*) It wouldn't if you possessed a bit of spunk. The idea of you permittin' him to come in to meals at all hours—and you doin' the work! I never heard of such a thin'. You're too easy goin', that's the trouble.

RUTH. Do stop your nagging at me, Ma! I'm sick of hearing you. I'll do as I please about it; and thank you for not interfering. (*She wipes her moist forehead—wearily.*) Phew! It's too hot to argue. Let's talk of something pleasant. (*Curiously.*) Didn't I hear you speaking about Andy a while ago?

MRS. MAYO. We were wondering when he'd get home.

RUTH. (*Brightening.*) Rob says any day now he's liable to drop in and surprise us—him and the Captain. It'll certainly look natural to see him around the farm again.

MRS. ATKINS. Let's hope the farm'll look more natural, too, when he's had a hand at it. The way thin's are now!

RUTH. (*Irritably.*) Will you stop harping on that, Ma? We all know things aren't as they might be. What's the good of your complaining all the time?

MRS. ATKINS. There, Kate Mayo! Ain't that just what I told you? I can't say a word of advice to my own daughter even, she's that stubborn and self-willed.

RUTH. (*Putting her hands over her ears—in exasperation.*) For goodness' sakes, Ma!

MRS. MAYO. (*Dully.*) Never mind. Andy'll fix everything when he comes.

RUTH. (*Hopefully.*) Oh, yes, I know he will. He always did know just the right thing ought to be done. (*With weary vexation.*) It's a shame for him to come home and have to start in with things in such a topsy-turvy.

MRS. MAYO. Andy'll manage.

RUTH. (*Sighing.*) I s'pose it isn't Rob's fault things go wrong with him.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Scornfully.*) Hump! (*She fans herself nervously.*) Land o' Goshen, but it's bakin' in here! Let's go out in under the trees in back where there's a breath of fresh air. Come, Kate. (MRS. MAYO *gets up obediently and starts to wheel the invalid's chair toward the screen door.*) You better come too, Ruth. It'll do you good. Learn him a lesson and let him get his own dinner. Don't be such a fool.

RUTH. (*Going and holding the scree door open for them—listlessly.*) I wouldn't mind. He doesn't eat muc But I can't go anyway. I've got to p baby to bed.

MRS. ATKINS. Let's go, Kate. I'm boili in here. (MRS. MAYO *wheels her o and off left.* RUTH *comes back and s down in her chair.*)

RUTH. (*Mechanically.*) Come and let r take off your shoes and stocking Mary, that's a good girl. You've g to take your nap now. (*The ch continues to play as if she had heard, absorbed in her doll. eager expression comes over* RUTH'S *tir face. She glances toward the door f tively—then gets up and goes to t desk. Her movements indicate a guil fear of discovery. She takes a lett from a pigeonhole and retreats swift to her chair with it. She opens the e velope and reads the letter w great interest, a flush of exciteme coming to her cheeks.* ROBERT *wal up the path and opens the scre door quietly and comes into t room. He, too, has aged. His sho ders are stooped as if under too great burden. His eyes are dull and lifele his face burned by the sun and u shaven for days. Streaks of sweat ha smudged the layer of dust on his chee His lips, drawn down at the corners, g him a hopeless, resigned expressio The three years have accentuated t weakness of his mouth and chin. He dressed in overalls, laced boots, and flannel shirt open at the neck.*)

ROBERT. (*Throwing his hat over on t sofa—with a great sigh of exhaustion* Phew! The sun's hot today! (RUTH *startled. At first she makes an insti tive motion as if to hide the letter her bosom. She immediately thinks b ter of this and sits with the letter in hands looking at him with defiant ey He bends down and kisses her.*)

RUTH. (*Feeling of her cheek—irritabl* Why don't you shave? You look a ful.

ROBERT. (*Indifferently.*) I forgot—a it's too much trouble this weather.

MARY. (*Throwing aside her doll, r to him with a happy cry.*) Dada! I da!

ROBERT. (*Swinging her up above his h —lovingly.*) And how's this little g of mine this hot day, eh?

Y. (*Screeching happily.*) Dada! Da-
a!
H. (*In annoyance.*) Don't do that to
er! You know it's time for her nap
nd you'll get her all waked up; then
ll be the one that'll have to sit beside
er till she falls asleep.
ERT. (*Sitting down in the chair on the
ft of table and cuddling* MARY *on his
ap.* You needn't bother. I'll put her
o bed.
H. (*Shortly.*) You've got to get back
o your work, I s'pose.
ERT. (*With a sigh.*) Yes, I was for-
etting. (*He glances at the open letter
n* RUTH'S *lap.*) Reading Andy's let-
er again? I should think you'd know
t by heart by this time.
TH. (*Coloring as if she'd been accused
f something—defiantly.*) I've got a
ight to read it, haven't I? He says
t's meant for all of us.
ERT. (*With a trace of irritation.*)
Right? Don't be so silly. There's no
uestion of right, I was only saying that
ou must know all that's in it after so
nany readings.
TH. Well, I don't. (*She puts the let-
er on the table and gets wearily to her
eet.*) I s'pose you'll be wanting your
linner now.
ERT. (*Listlessly.*) I don't care. I'm
not hungry.
TH. And here I been keeping it hot
for you!
ERT. (*Irritably.*) Oh, all right then.
Bring it in and I'll try to eat.
TH. I've got to get her to bed first.
(*She goes to lift* MARY *off his lap.*)
Come, dear. It's after time and you
can hardly keep your eyes open now.
ARY. (*Crying.*) No, no! (*Appealing
to her father.*)
TH. (*Accusingly to* ROBERT.) There!
Now see what you've done! I told you
not to—
OBERT. (*Shortly.*) Let her alone, then.
She's all right where she is. She'll fall
asleep on my lap in a minute if you'll
stop bothering her.
TH. (*Hotly.*) She'll not do any such
thing! She's got to learn to mind me!
(*Shaking her finger at* MARY.) You
naughty child! Will you come with
Mama when she tells you for your own
good?
ARY. (*Clinging to her father.*) No,
Dada!
UTH. (*Losing her temper.*) A good
spanking's what you need, my young
lady—and you'll get one from me if you
don't mind better, d'you hear? (MARY
starts to whimper frightenedly.)
ROBERT. (*With sudden anger.*) Leave
her alone! How often have I told you
not to threaten her with whipping? I
won't have it. (*Soothing the wailing*
MARY.) There! There, little girl!
Baby mustn't cry. Dada won't like you
if you do. Dada'll hold you and you
must promise to go to sleep like a good
little girl. Will you when Dada asks
you?
MARY. (*Cuddling up to him.*) Yes, Da-
da.
RUTH. (*Looking at them, her pale face
set and drawn.*) A fine one you are to
be telling folks how to do things! (*She
bites her lips. Husband and wife look
into each other's eyes with something
akin to hatred in their expressions; then*
RUTH *turns away with a shrug of affected
indifference.*) All right, take care of
her then, if you think it's so easy. (*She
walks away into the kitchen.*)
ROBERT. (*Smoothing* MARY'S *hair—ten-
derly.*) We'll show Mama you're a good
little girl, won't we?
MARY. (*Crooning drowsily.*) Dada, Da-
da.
ROBERT. Let's see: Does your mother
take off your shoes and stockings be-
fore your nap?
MARY. (*Nodding with half-shut eyes.*)
Yes, Dada.
ROBERT. (*Taking off her shoes and stock-
ings.*) We'll show Mama we know how
to do those things, won't we? There's
one old shoe off—and there's the other
old shoe—and here's one old stocking—
and there's the other old stocking. There
we are, all nice and cool and comfy.
(*He bends down and kisses her.*) And
now will you promise to go right to
sleep if Dada takes you to bed? (MARY
nods sleepily.) That's the good little
girl. (*He gathers her up in his arms
carefully and carries her into the bed-
room. His voice can be heard faintly as
he lulls the child to sleep.* RUTH *comes
out of the kitchen and gets the plate from
the table. She hears the voice from
the room and tiptoes to the door to look
in. Then she starts for the kitchen but
stands for a moment thinking, a look
of ill-concealed jealousy on her face. At
a noise from inside she hurriedly dis-
appears into the kitchen. A moment*

later ROBERT *re-enters. He comes forward and picks up the shoes and stockings which he shoves carelessly under the table. Then, seeing no one about, he goes to the sideboard and selects a book. Coming back to his chair, he sits down and immediately becomes absorbed in reading.* RUTH *returns from the kitchen bringing his plate heaped with food, and a cup of tea. She sets those before him and sits down in her former place.* ROBERT *continues to read, oblivious to the food on the table.*)

RUTH. (*After watching him irritably for a moment.*) For heaven's sakes, put down that old book! Don't you see your dinner's getting cold?

ROBERT. (*Closing his book.*) Excuse me, Ruth. I didn't notice. (*He picks up his knife and fork and begins to eat gingerly, without appetite.*)

RUTH. I should think you might have some feeling for me, Rob, and not always be late for meals. If you think it's fun sweltering in that oven of a kitchen to keep things warm for you, you're mistaken.

ROBERT. I'm sorry, Ruth, really I am. Something crops up every day to delay me. I mean to be here on time.

RUTH. (*With a sigh.*) Mean-tos don't count.

ROBERT. (*With a conciliating smile.*) Then punish me, Ruth. Let the food get cold and don't bother about me.

RUTH. I'd have to wait just the same to wash up after you.

ROBERT. But I can wash up.

RUTH. A nice mess there'd be then!

ROBERT. (*With an attempt at lightness.*) The food is lucky to be able to get cold this weather. (*As* RUTH *doesn't answer or smile he opens his book and resumes his reading, forcing himself to take a mouthful of food every now and then.* RUTH *stares at him in annoyance.*)

RUTH. And besides, you've got your own work that's got to be done.

ROBERT. (*Absent-mindedly, without taking his eyes from the book.*) Yes, of course.

RUTH. (*Spitefully.*) Work you'll never get done by reading books all the time.

ROBERT. (*Shutting the book with a snap.*) Why do you persist in nagging at me for getting pleasure out of reading? Is it because— (*He checks himself abruptly.*)

RUTH. (*Coloring.*) Because I'm too stupid to understand them, I s'pose you were going to say.

ROBERT. (*Shame-facedly.*) No—no. (*Exasperation.*) Why do you goad me into saying things I don't mean? Haven't I got my share of troubles trying to work this cursed farm without your adding to them? You know how hard I've tried to keep things going in spite of bad luck—

RUTH. (*Scornfully.*) Bad luck!

ROBERT. And my own very apparent unfitness for the job, I was going to add, but you can't deny there's been bad luck to it, too. Why don't you take things into consideration? Why can't we pull together? We used to. I know it's hard on you also. Then why can't we help each other instead of hindering?

RUTH. (*Sullenly.*) I do the best I know how.

ROBERT. (*Gets up and puts his hand on her shoulder.*) I know you do. But let's both of us try to do better. We can both improve. Say a word of encouragement once in a while when things go wrong, even if it is my fault. You know the odds I've been up against since Pa died. I'm not a farmer. I've never claimed to be one. But there's nothing else I can do under the circumstances and I've got to pull things through somehow. With your help, I can do it. With you against me— (*He shrugs his shoulders. There is a pause. Then he bends down and kisses her hair—with an attempt at cheerfulness.*) Say you promise that; and I'll promise to be here when the clock strikes—and anything else you tell me to. Is it a bargain?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I s'pose so. (*They are interrupted by the sound of a loud knock at the kitchen door.*) There's someone at the kitchen door. (*She hurries out. A moment later she reappears.*) It's Ben.

ROBERT. (*Frowning.*) What's the trouble now, I wonder? (*In a loud voice.*) Come on in here, Ben. (BEN *slouches in from the kitchen. He is a hulking, awkward young fellow with a heavy, stupid face and shifty, cunning eyes. He is dressed in overalls, boots, etc., and wears a broad-brimmed hat of coarse straw pushed back on his head.*) Well, Ben, what's the matter?

BEN. (*Drawlingly.*) The mowin' machine's bust.

ERT. Why, that can't be. The man ed it only last week.

It's bust just the same.

ERT. And can't you fix it?

No. Don't know what's the matter th the goll-darned thing. 'Twon't ork, anyhow.

ERT. (*Getting up and going for his t.*) Wait a minute and I'll go look it er. There can't be much the matter th it.

. (*Impudently.*) Don't make no dif- rence t'me whether there be or not. m quittin'.

ERT. (*Anxiously.*) You don't mean ou're throwing up your job here?

. That's what! My month's up to- ay and I want what's owin' t'me.

ERT. But why are you quitting now, en, when you know I've so much work h hand? I'll have a hard time getting nother man at such short notice.

. That's for you to figger. I'm quit- in'.

ERT. But what's your reason? You aven't any complaint to make about ie way you've been treated, have you?

. No. 'Taint that. (*Shaking his nger.*) Look-a-here. I'm sick o' being ade fun at, that's what; an' I got a ob up to Timms' place; an' I'm quittin' ere.

ERT. Being made fun of? I don't nderstand you. Who's making fun of ou?

N. They all do. When I drive down with the milk in the mornin' they all aughs and jokes at me—that boy up to Harris' and the new feller up to Slo- um's, and Bill Evans down to Meade's, nd all the rest on 'em.

ERT. That's a queer reason for leav- ng me flat. Won't they laugh at you just the same when you're working for Timms?

N. They wouldn't dare to. Timms is the best farm hereabouts. They was laughin' at me for workin' for *you*, that's what! "How're things up to the Mayo place?" they hollers every mornin'. "What's Robert doin' now—pasturin' the cattle in the cornlot? Is he seasonin' his hay with rain this year, same as last?" they shouts. "Or is he inventin' some 'lectrical milkin' engine to fool them dry cows o' his into givin' hard cider?" (*Very much ruffled.*) That's like they talks; and I ain't goin' to put up with it no longer. Everyone's always knowed me as a first-class hand hereabouts, and I ain't wantin' 'em to get no different notion. So I'm quittin' you. And I wants what's comin' to me.

ROBERT. (*Coldly.*) Oh, if that's the case, you can go to the devil. You'll get your money tomorrow when I get back from town—not before!

BEN. (*Turning to doorway to kitchen.*) That suits me. (*As he goes out he speaks back over his shoulder.*) And see that I do get it, or there'll be trouble. (*He disappears and the slamming of the kitchen door is heard.*)

ROBERT. (*As* RUTH *comes from where she has been standing by the doorway and sits down dejectedly in her old place.*) The stupid damn fool! And now what about the haying? That's an example of what I'm up against. No one can say I'm responsible for that.

RUTH. He wouldn't dare act that way with any one else! (*Spitefully, with a glance at* ANDREW'S *letter on the table.*) It's lucky Andy's coming back.

ROBERT. (*Without resentment.*) Yes, Andy'll see the right thing to do in a jiffy. (*With an affectionate smile.*) I wonder if the old chump's changed much? He doesn't seem to from his letters, does he? (*Shaking his head.*) But just the same I doubt if he'll want to settle down to a hum-drum farm life, after all he's been through.

RUTH. (*Resentfully.*) Andy's not like you. He likes the farm.

ROBERT. (*Immersed in his own thoughts —enthusiastically.*) Gad, the things he's seen and experienced! Think of the places he's been! All the wonderful far places I used to dream about! God, how I envy him! What a trip! (*He springs to his feet and instinctively goes to the window and stares out at the horizon.*)

RUTH. (*Bitterly.*) I s'pose you're sorry now you didn't go?

ROBERT. (*Too occupied with his own thoughts to hear her—vindictively.*) Oh, those cursed hills out there that I used to think promised me so much! How I've grown to hate the sight of them! They're like the walls of a narrow prison yard shutting me in from all the freedom and wonder of life! (*He turns back to the room with a gesture of loathing.*) Sometimes I think if it wasn't for you, Ruth, and—(*his voice softening*)—little Mary, I'd chuck every-

thing up and walk down the road with just one desire in my heart—to put the whole rim of the world between me and those hills, and be able to breathe freely once more! (*He sinks down into his chair and smiles with bitter self-scorn.*) There I go dreaming again—my old fool dreams.

RUTH. (*In a low, repressed voice—her eyes smoldering.*) You're not the only one!

ROBERT. (*Buried in his own thoughts—bitterly.*) And Andy, who's had the chance—what has he got out of it? His letters read like the diary of a—of a farmer! "We're in Singapore now. It's a dirty hole of a place and hotter than hell. Two of the crew are down with fever and we're short-handed on the work. I'll be damn glad when we sail again, although tacking back and forth in these blistering seas is a rotten job too!" (*Scornfully.*) That's about the way he summed up his impressions of the East.

RUTH. (*Her repressed voice trembling.*) You needn't make fun of Andy.

ROBERT. When I think—but what's the use? You know I wasn't making fun of Andy personally, but his attitude toward things is—

RUTH. (*Her eyes flashing—bursting into uncontrollable rage.*) You was too making fun of him! And I ain't going to stand for it! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! (ROBERT *stares at her in amazement. She continues furiously.*) A fine one to talk about anyone else—after the way you've ruined everything with your lazy loafing!—and the stupid way you do things.

ROBERT. (*Angrily.*) Stop that kind of talk, do you hear?

RUTH. You findin' fault—with your own brother who's ten times the man you ever was or ever will be! You're jealous, that's what! Jealous because he's made a man of himself, while you're nothing but a—but a— (*She stutters incoherently, overcome by rage.*)

ROBERT. Ruth! Ruth! You'll be sorry for talking like that.

RUTH. I won't! I won't never be sorry! I'm only saying what I've been thinking for years.

ROBERT. (*Aghast.*) Ruth! You can't mean that!

RUTH. What do you think—living with a man like you—having to suffer all t time because you've never been m enough to work and do things like oth people. But no! You never own up that. You think you're so much bett than other folks, with your college e ucation, where you never learned thing, and always reading your stup books instead of working. I s'pose y think I ought to be *proud* to be yo wife—a poor, ignorant thing like m (*Fiercely.*) But I'm not. I hate it! hate the sight of you. Oh, if I'd on known! If I hadn't been such a f to listen to your cheap, silly, poetry t that you learned out of books! If could have seen how you were in yo true self—like you are now—I'd ha killed myself before I'd have marr you! I was sorry for it before w been together a month. I knew wh you were really like—when it was late.

ROBERT. (*His voice raised loudly.*) A now—I'm finding out what you're rea like—what a—a creature I've been l ing with. (*With a harsh laugh.*) Go It wasn't that I haven't guessed how m and small you are—but I've kept on t ing myself that I must be wrong—l a fool!—like a damned fool!

RUTH. You were saying you'd go out the road if it wasn't for me. Well, y can go, and the sooner the better! don't care! I'll be glad to get rid you! The farm'll be better off t There's been a curse on it ever since took hold. So go! Go and be a tra like you've always wanted. It's you're good for. I can get along wi out you, don't you worry. (*Exult fiercely.*) Andy's coming back, d forget that! He'll attend to things they should be. He'll show what a m can do! I don't need you. An coming!

ROBERT. (*They are both standing. R* ERT *grabs her by the shoulders and gl into her eyes.*) What do you me (*He shakes her violently.*) What you thinking of? What's in your mind, you—you— (*His voice is a h shout.*)

RUTH. (*In a defiant scream.*) Yes, I mean it! I'd say it if you was to me! I do love Andy. I do! I I always loved him. (*Exultant* And he loves me! He loves me! know he does. He always did!

ou know he did, too! So go! Go if ou want to!

BERT. (*Throwing her away from him. he staggers back against the table—hickly.*) You—you slut! (*He stands laring at her as she leans back, supporting herself by the table, gasping for reath. A loud frightened whimper ounds from the awakened child in the edroom. It continues. The man and oman stand looking at one another in orror, the extent of their terrible quarel suddenly brought home to them. A ause. The noise of a horse and carriage comes from the road before the ouse. The two, suddenly struck by the ame premonition, listen to it breathessly, as to a sound heard in a dream. It stops. They hear* ANDY'S *voice from he road shouting a long hail—"Ahoy here!"*

TH. (*With a strangled cry of joy.*) Andy! Andy! (*She rushes and grabs the knob of the screen door, about to fling it open.*)

BERT. (*In a voice of command that forces obedience.*) Stop! (*He goes to the door and gently pushes the trembling* RUTH *away from it. The child's crying rises to a louder pitch.*) I'll meet Andy. You better go in to Mary, Ruth. (*She looks at him defiantly for a moment, but there is something in his eyes that makes her turn and walk slowly into the bedroom.*)

NDY'S VOICE. (*In a louder shout.*) Ahoy there, Rob!

BERT. (*In an answering shout of forced cheeriness.*) Hello, Andy! (*He opens the door and walks out as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

CENE. *The top of a hill on the farm. It is about eleven o'clock the next morning. The day is hot and cloudless. In the distance the sea can be seen.*

he top of the hill slopes downward slightly toward the left. A big boulder stands in the center toward the rear. Further right, a large oak tree. The faint trace of a path leading upward to it from the left foreground can be detected through the bleached, sun-scorched grass.

OBERT *is discovered sitting on the boulder, his chin resting on his hands, staring out toward the horizon seaward. His face is pale and haggard, his expression one of utter despondency.* MARY *is sitting on the grass near him in the shade, playing with her doll, singing happily to herself. Presently she casts a curious glance at her father, and, propping her doll up against the tree, comes over and clambers to his side.*

MARY. (*Pulling at his hand—solicitously.*) Dada sick?

ROBERT. (*Looking at her with a forced smile.*) No, dear. Why?

MARY. Play wif Mary.

ROBERT. (*Gently.*) No, dear, not today. Dada doesn't feel like playing today.

MARY. (*Protestingly.*) Yes, Dada!

ROBERT. No, dear. Dada does feel sick—a little. He's got a bad headache.

MARY. Mary see. (*He bends his head. She pats his hair.*) Bad head.

ROBERT. (*Kissing her—with a smile.*) There! It's better now, dear, thank you. (*She cuddles up close against him. There is a pause during which each of them looks out seaward. Finally* ROBERT *turns to her tenderly.*) Would you like Dada to go away?—far, far away?

MARY. (*Tearfully.*) No! No! No, Dada, no!

ROBERT. Don't you like Uncle Andy—the man that came yesterday—not the old man with the white mustache—the other?

MARY. Mary loves Dada.

ROBERT. (*With fierce determination.*) He won't go away, baby. He was only joking. He couldn't leave his little Mary. (*He presses the child in his arms.*)

MARY. (*With an exclamation of pain.*) Oh! Hurt!

ROBERT. I'm sorry, little girl. (*He lifts her down to the grass.*) Go play with Dolly, that's a good girl; and be careful to keep in the shade. (*She reluctantly leaves him and takes up her doll again. A moment later she points down the hill to the left.*)

MARY. Mans, Dada.

ROBERT. (*Looking that way.*) It's your Uncle Andy. (*A moment later* ANDREW *comes up from the left, whistling cheerfully. He has changed but little in appearance, except for the fact that his face has been deeply bronzed by his years in the tropics; but there is a decided change in his manner.*

The old easy-going good-nature seems to have been partly lost in a breezy, business-like briskness of voice and gesture. There is an authoritative note in his speech as though he were accustomed to give orders and have them obeyed as a matter of course. He is dressed in the simple blue uniform and cap of a merchant ship's officer.)

ANDREW. Here you are, eh?

ROBERT. Hello, Andy.

ANDREW. (*Going over to* MARY.) And who's this young lady I find you all alone with, eh? Who's this pretty young lady? (*He tickles the laughing, squirming* MARY, *then lifts her up at arm's length over his head.*) Upsy—daisy! (*He sets her down on the ground again.*) And there you are! (*He walks over and sits down on the boulder beside* ROBERT *who moves to one side to make room for him.*) Ruth told me I'd probably find you up top-side here; but I'd have guessed it, anyway. (*He digs his brother in the ribs affectionately.*) Still up to your old tricks, you old beggar! I can remember how you used to come up here to mope and dream in the old days.

ROBERT. (*With a smile.*) I come up here now because it's the coolest place on the farm. I've given up dreaming.

ANDREW. (*Grinning.*) I don't believe it. You can't have changed that much. (*After a pause—with boyish enthusiasm.*) Say, it sure brings back old times to be up here with you having a chin all by our lonesomes again. I feel great being back home.

ROBERT. It's great for us to have you back.

ANDREW. (*After a pause—meaningly.*) I've been looking over the old place with Ruth. Things don't seem to be—

ROBERT. (*His face flushing—interrupts his brother shortly.*) Never mind the damn farm! Let's talk about something interesting. This is the first chance I've had to have a word with you alone. Tell me about your trip.

ANDREW. Why, I thought I told you everything in my letters.

ROBERT. (*Smiling.*) Your letters were—sketchy, to say the least.

ANDREW. Oh, I know I'm no author. You needn't be afraid of hurting my feelings. I'd rather go through a typhoon again than write a letter.

ROBERT. (*With eager interest.*) Then yo were through a typhoon?

ANDREW. Yes—in the China sea. Had t run before it under bare poles for tw days. I thought we were bound dow for Davy Jones, sure. Never dreame waves could get so big or the wind blo so hard. If it hadn't been for Unc Dick being such a good skipper we' have gone to the sharks, all of us. As was we came out minus a main top mast and had to beat back to Hong-Kon for repairs. But I must have writte you all this.

ROBERT. You never mentioned it.

ANDREW. Well, there was so much dirt work getting things ship-shape again must have forgotten about it.

ROBERT. (*Looking at* ANDREW—*marve ing.*) Forget a typhoon? (*With trace of scorn.*) You're a strange com bination, Andy. And is what you've to me all you remember about it?

ANDREW. Oh, I could give you your bell ful of details if I wanted to turn loo on you. It was all-wool-and-a-yar wide-Hell, I'll tell you. You ought have been there. I remember thinkin about you at the worst of it, and sayin to myself: "This'd cure Rob of the ideas of his about the beautiful sea, he could see it." And it would ha too, you bet! (*He nods emphatically.*

ROBERT. (*Dryly.*) The sea doesn't see to have impressed you very favorably

ANDREW. I should say it didn't! I never set foot on a ship again if I c help it—except to carry me some pla I can't get to by train.

ROBERT. But you studied to become officer!

ANDREW. Had to do something or I'd go mad. The days were like years. (*L laughs.*) And as for the East you us to rave about—well, you ought to s it, and *smell* it! One walk down one their filthy narrow streets with the tro sun beating on it would sicken you f life with the "wonder and mystery" y used to dream of.

ROBERT. (*Shrinking from his brother w a glance of aversion.*) So all you fou in the East was a stench?

ANDREW. *A* stench! Ten thousand them!

ROBERT. But you did like some of t places, judging from your letters Sydney, Buenos Aires—

DREW. Yes, Sydney's a good town. *Enthusiastically.*) But Buenos Aires—here's the place for you. Argentine's a country where a fellow has a chance to make good. You're right I like it. And I'll tell you, Rob, that's right where I'm going just as soon as I've seen you folks a while and can get a ship. I can get a berth as second officer, and I'll jump the ship when I get there. I'll need every cent of the wages Uncle's paid me to get a start at something in B. A.

BERT. (*Staring at his brother—slowly.*) So you're not going to stay on the farm?

DREW. Why sure not! Did you think I was? There wouldn't be any sense. One of us is enough to run this little place.

BERT. I suppose it does seem small to you now.

DREW. (*Not noticing the sarcasm in* ROBERT'S *tone.*) You've no idea, Rob, what a splendid place Argentine is. I had a letter from a marine insurance chap that I'd made friends with in Hong-Kong, to his brother, who's in the grain business in Buenos Aires. He took quite a fancy to me, and, what's more important, he offered me a job if I'd come back there. I'd have taken it on the spot, only I couldn't leave Uncle Dick in the lurch, and I'd promised you folks to come home. But I'm going back there, you bet, and then you watch me get on! (*He slaps* ROBERT *on the back.*) But don't you think it's a big chance, Rob?

OBERT. It's fine—for you, Andy.

NDREW. We call this a farm—but you ought to hear about the farms down there—ten square miles where we've got an acre. It's a new country where big things are opening up—and I want to get in on something big before I die. I'm no fool when it comes to farming, and I know something about grain. I've been reading up a lot on it, too, lately. (*He notices* ROBERT'S *absent-minded expression and laughs.*) Wake up, you old poetry book worm, you! I know my talking about business makes you want to choke me, doesn't it?

OBERT. (*With an embarrassed smile.*) No, Andy, I—I just happened to think of something else. (*Frowning.*) There've been lots of times lately that I've wished I had some of your faculty for business.

NDREW. (*Soberly.*) There's something I want to talk about, Rob,—the farm. You don't mind, do you?

ROBERT. No.

ANDREW. I walked over it this morning with Ruth—and she told me about things— (*Evasively.*) I could see the place had run down; but you mustn't blame yourself. When luck's against anyone—

ROBERT. Don't, Andy! It *is* my fault. You know it as well as I do. The best I've ever done was to make ends meet.

ANDREW. (*After a pause.*) I've got over a thousand saved, and you can have that.

ROBERT. (*Firmly.*) No. You need that for your start in Buenos Aires.

ANDREW. I don't. I can—

ROBERT. (*Determinedly.*) No, Andy! Once and for all, no! I won't hear of it!

ANDREW. (*Protestingly.*) You obstinate old son of a gun!

ROBERT. Oh, everything'll be on a sound footing after harvest. Don't worry about it.

ANDREW. (*Doubtfully.*) Maybe. (*After a pause.*) It's too bad Pa couldn't have lived to see things through. (*With feeling.*) It cut me up a lot—hearing he was dead. He never—softened up, did he—about me, I mean?

ROBERT. He never understood, that's a kinder way of putting it. He does now.

ANDREW. (*After a pause.*) You've forgotten all about what—caused me to go, haven't you, Rob? (ROBERT *nods but keeps his face averted.*) I was a slushier damn fool in those days than you were. But it was an act of Providence I did go. It opened my eyes to how I'd been fooling myself. Why, I'd forgotten all about—that—before I'd been at sea six months.

ROBERT. (*Turns and looks into* ANDREW'S *eyes searchingly.*) You're speaking of —Ruth?

ANDREW. (*Confused.*) Yes. I didn't want you to get false notions in your head, or I wouldn't say anything. (*Looking* ROBERT *squarely in the eyes.*) I'm telling you the truth when I say I'd forgotten long ago. It don't sound well for me, getting over things so easy, but I guess it never really amounted to more than a kid idea I was letting rule me. I'm certain now I never was in love—I was getting fun out of thinking I was—and being a hero to myself. (*He heaves*

a great sigh of relief.) There! Gosh, I'm glad that's off my chest. I've been feeling sort of awkward ever since I've been home, thinking of what you two might think. (*A trace of appeal in his voice.*) You've got it all straight now, haven't you, Rob?

ROBERT. (*In a low voice.*) Yes, Andy.

ANDREW. And I'll tell Ruth, too, if I can get up the nerve. She must feel kind of funny having me round—after what used to be—and not knowing how I feel about it.

ROBERT. (*Slowly.*) Perhaps—for her sake—you'd better not tell her.

ANDREW. For her sake? Oh, you mean she wouldn't want to be reminded of my foolishness? Still, I think it'd be worse if—

ROBERT. (*Breaking out—in an agonized voice.*) Do as you please, Andy; but for God's sake, let's not talk about it! (*There is a pause.* ANDREW *stares at* ROBERT *in hurt stupefaction.* ROBERT *continues after a moment in a voice which he vainly attempts to keep calm.*) Excuse me, Andy. This rotten headache has my nerves shot to pieces.

ANDREW. (*Mumbling.*) It's all right, Rob—long as you're not sore at me.

ROBERT. Where did Uncle Dick disappear to this morning?

ANDREW. He went down to the port to see to things on the *Sunda*. He said he didn't know exactly when he'd be back. I'll have to go down and tend to the ship when he comes. That's why I dressed up in these togs.

MARY. (*Pointing down the hill to the left.*) See! Mama! Mama! (*She struggles to her feet.* RUTH *appears at left. She is dressed in white, shows she has been fixing up. She looks pretty, flushed and full of life.*)

MARY. (*Running to her mother.*) Mama!

RUTH. (*Kissing her.*) Hello, dear! (*She walks toward the rock and addresses* ROBERT *coldly.*) Jake wants to see you about something. He finished working where he was. He's waiting for you at the road.

ROBERT. (*Getting up—wearily.*) I'll go down right away. (*As he looks at* RUTH, *noting her changed appearance, his face darkens with pain.*)

RUTH. And take Mary with you, please. (*To* MARY.) Go with Dada, that's a good girl. Grandma has your dinner most ready for you.

ROBERT. (*Shortly.*) Come, Mary!

MARY. (*Taking his hand and dancin happily beside him.*) Dada! Dada (*They go down the hill to the lef* RUTH *looks after them for a momen frowning—then turns to* ANDY *with smile.*) I'm going to sit down. Com on, Andy. It'll be like old times. (*Sh jumps lightly to the top of the rock an sits down.*) It's so fine and cool up her after the house.

ANDREW. (*Half-sitting on the side of th boulder.*) Yes. It's great.

RUTH. I've taken a holiday in honor o your arrival. (*Laughing excitedly.*) I feel so free I'd like to have wings an fly over the sea. You're a man. Yo can't know how awful and stupid it is— cooking and washing dishes all the tim

ANDREW. (*Making a wry face.*) I ca guess.

RUTH. Besides, your mother just insiste on getting your first dinner to home, she that happy at having you back. You think I was planning to poison you th flurried way she shooed me out of th kitchen.

ANDREW. That's just like Ma, bless he

RUTH. She's missed you terrible. We a have. And you can't deny the far has, after what I showed you and to you when we was looking over the pla this morning.

ANDREW. (*With a frown.*) Things a run down, that's a fact! It's too da hard on poor old Rob.

RUTH. (*Scornfully.*) It's his own fau He never takes any interest in things.

ANDREW. (*Reprovingly.*) You can't blam him. He wasn't born for it; but I kno he's done his best for your sake and t old folks and the little girl.

RUTH. (*Indifferently.*) Yes, I suppo he has. (*Gaily.*) But thank the Lor all those days are over now. The "ha luck" Rob's always blaming won't la long when you take hold, Andy. All t farm's ever needed was someone wi the knack of looking ahead and prepa ing for what's going to happen.

ANDREW. Yes, Rob hasn't got that. H frank to own up to that himself. I going to try and hire a good man for h —an experienced farmer—to work t place on a salary and percenta That'll take it off of Rob's hands, and needn't be worrying himself to death a more. He looks all worn out, Ruth. I ought to be careful.

RTH. (*Absent-mindedly.*) Yes, I s'pose. (*Her mind is filled with premonitions by the first part of his statement.*) Why do you want to hire a man to oversee things? Seems as if now that you're back it wouldn't be needful.

ANDREW. Oh, of course I'll attend to everything while I'm here. I mean after I'm gone.

RTH. (*As if she couldn't believe her ears.*) Gone!

ANDREW. Yes. When I leave for the Argentine again.

RTH. (*Aghast.*) You're going away to sea!

NDREW. Not to sea, no; I'm through with the sea for good as a job. I'm going down to Buenos Aires to get in the grain business.

RTH. But—that's far off—isn't it?

NDREW. (*Easily.*) Six thousand miles more or less. It's quite a trip. (*With enthusiasm.*) I've got a peach of a chance down there, Ruth. Ask Rob if I haven't. I've just been telling him all about it.

UTH. (*A flush of anger coming over her face.*) And didn't he try to stop you from going?

NDREW. (*In surprise.*) No, of course not. Why?

UTH. (*Slowly and vindictively.*) That's just like him—not to.

NDREW. (*Resentfully.*) Rob's too good a chum to try and stop me when he knows I'm set on a thing. And he could see just as soon's I told him what a good chance it was.

UTH. (*Dazedly.*) And you're bound on going?

NDREW. Sure thing. Oh, I don't mean right off. I'll have to wait for a ship sailing there for quite a while, likely. Anyway, I want to stay to home and visit with you folks a spell before I go.

UTH. (*Dumbly.*) I s'pose. (*With sudden anguish.*) Oh, Andy, you can't go! You can't. Why we've all thought—we've all been hoping and praying you was coming home to stay, to settle down on the farm and see to things. You mustn't go! Think of how your Ma'll take on if you go—and how the farm'll be ruined if you leave it to Rob to look after. You can see that.

ANDREW. (*Frowning.*) Rob hasn't done so bad. When I get a man to direct things the farm'll be safe enough.

RUTH. (*Insistently.*) But your Ma—think of her.

ANDREW. She's used to me being away. She won't object when she knows it's best for her and all of us for me to go. You ask Rob. In a couple of years down there I'll make my pile, see if I don't; and then I'll come back and settle down and turn this farm into the crackiest place in the whole state. In the meantime, I can help you both from down there. (*Earnestly.*) I tell you, Ruth, I'm going to make good right from the minute I land, if working hard and a determination to get on can do it; and I *know* they can! (*Excitedly—in a rather boastful tone.*) I tell you, I feel ripe for bigger things than settling down here. The trip did that for me, anyway. It showed me the world is a larger proposition than ever I thought it was in the old days. I couldn't be content any more stuck here like a fly in molasses. It all seems trifling, somehow. You ought to be able to understand what I feel.

RUTH. (*Dully.*) Yes— I s'pose I ought. (*After a pause—a sudden suspicion forming in her mind.*) What did Rob tell you—about me?

ANDREW. Tell? About you? Why, nothing.

RUTH. (*Staring at him intensely.*) Are you telling me the truth, Andy Mayo? Didn't he say—I— (*She stops confusedly.*)

ANDREW. (*Surprised.*) No, he didn't mention you, I can remember. Why? what made you think he did?

RUTH. (*Wringing her hands.*) Oh, I wish I could tell if you're lying or not!

ANDREW. (*Indignantly.*) What're you talking about? I didn't used to lie to you, did I? And what in the name of God is there to lie for?

RUTH. (*Still unconvinced.*) Are you sure—will you swear—it isn't the reason—(*She lowers her eyes and half turns away from him.*) The same reason that made you go last time that's driving you away again? 'Cause if it is—I was going to say—you mustn't go—on that account. (*Her voice sinks to a tremulous, tender whisper as she finishes.*)

ANDREW. (*Confused—forces a laugh.*) Oh, is *that* what you're driving at? Well, you needn't worry about that no more— (*Soberly.*) I don't blame you, Ruth, feeling embarrassed having me

around again, after the way I played the dumb fool about going away last time.

RUTH. (*Her hope crushed—with a gasp of pain.*) Oh Andy!

ANDREW. (*Misunderstanding.*) I know I oughtn't to talk about such foolishness to you. Still I figure it's better to get it out of my system so's we three can be together same's years ago, and not be worried thinking one of us might have the wrong notion.

RUTH. Andy! Please! Don't!

ANDREW. Let me finish now that I've started. It'll help clear things up. I don't want you to think once a fool always a fool, and be upset all the time I'm here on my fool account. I want you to believe I put all that silly nonsense back of me a long time ago—and now—it seems—well—as if you'd always been my sister, that's what, Ruth.

RUTH. (*At the end of her endurance—laughing hysterically.*) For God's sake, Andy—won't you please stop talking! (*She again hides her face in her hands, her bowed shoulders trembling.*)

ANDREW. (*Ruefully.*) Seem's if I put my foot in it whenever I open my mouth today. Rob shut me up with almost the same words when I tried speaking to him about it.

RUTH. (*Fiercely.*) You told him—what you've told me?

ANDREW. (*Astounded.*) Why sure! Why not?

RUTH. (*Shuddering.*) Oh, my God!

ANDREW. (*Alarmed.*) Why? Shouldn't I have?

RUTH. (*Hysterically.*) Oh, I don't care what you do! I don't care! Leave me alone! (ANDREW *gets up and walks down the hill to the left, embarrassed, hurt, and greatly puzzled by her behavior.*)

ANDREW. (*After a pause—pointing down the hill.*) Hello. Here they come back—and the Captain's with them. How'd he come to get back so soon, I wonder? That means I've got to hustle down to the port and get on board. Rob's got the baby with him. (*He comes back to the boulder.* RUTH *keeps her face averted from him.*) Gosh, I never saw a father so tied up in a kid as Rob is! He just watches every move she makes. And I don't blame him. You both got a right to feel proud of her. She's surely a little winner. (*He glances at* RUTH *to see if this very obvious attempt to get back in her good graces is having any effect.*) I can see the likeness to Rob standing out all over her—can't you? But there's no denying she's your young one, either. There's something about her eyes—

RUTH. (*Piteously.*) Oh, Andy, I've a headache! I don't want to talk. Leave me alone, won't you please?

ANDREW. (*Stands staring at her for a moment—then walks away saying in a hurt tone*): Everybody hereabouts seems to be on edge today. I begin to feel as if I'm not wanted around. (*He stands near the path, left, kicking at the grass with the toe of his shoe. A moment later* CAPTAIN DICK SCOTT *enters, followed by* ROBERT *carrying* MARY. *The* CAPTAIN *seems scarcely to have changed at all from the jovial, booming person he was three years before. He wears a uniform similar to* ANDREW'S. *He is puffing and breathless from his climb and mops wildly at his perspiring countenance.* ROBERT *casts a quick glance at* ANDREW, *noticing the latter's discomfited look, and then turns his eyes on* RUTH *who, at their approach, has moved so her back is toward them, her chin resting on her hands as she stares out seaward.*)

MARY. Mama! Mama! (ROBERT *puts her down and she runs to her mother.* RUTH *turns and grabs her up in her arms with a sudden fierce tenderness, quickly turning away again from the others. During the following scene she keeps* MARY *in her arms.*)

SCOTT. (*Wheezily.*) Phew! I got great news for you, Andy. Let me get my wind first. Phew! God A'might! mountin' this damned hill is worser'n goin' aloft to the skys'l yard in a blow. I got to lay to a while. (*He sits down on the grass, mopping his face.*)

ANDREW. I didn't look for you this soon, Uncle.

SCOTT. I didn't figger it, neither; but I run across a bit o' news down to the Seamen's Home made me 'bout ship and set all sail back here to find you.

ANDREW. (*Eagerly.*) What is it, Uncle?

SCOTT. Passin' by the Home I thought I'd drop in an' let 'em know I'd be lackin' a mate next trip count o' your leavin'. Their man in charge o' the shippin' asked after you 'special curious. "Do you think he'd consider a berth as Second on a steamer, Captain?" he ask-

I was goin' to say no when I thinks o' you wantin' to get back down south to the Plate agen; so I asks him: "What is she and where's she bound?" "She's the *El Paso,* a brand new tramp," he says, "and she's bound for Buenos Aires."

ANDREW. (*His eyes lighting up—excitedly.*) Gosh, that is luck! When does she sail?

SCOTT. Tomorrow mornin'. I didn't know if you'd want to ship away agen so quick an' I told him so. "Tell him I'll hold the berth open for him until late this afternoon," he says. So there you be, an' you can make your own choice.

ANDREW. I'd like to take it. There may not be another ship for Buenos Aires with a vacancy in months. (*His eyes roving from* ROBERT *to* RUTH *and back again—uncertainly.*) Still—damn it all—tomorrow morning *is* soon. I wish she wasn't leaving for a week or so. That'd give me a chance—it seems hard to go right away again when I've just got home. And yet it's a chance in a thousand— (*Appealing to* ROBERT.) What do you think, Rob? What would you do?

ROBERT. (*Forcing a smile.*) He who hesitates, you know. (*Frowning.*) It's a piece of good luck thrown in your way —and—I think you owe it to yourself to jump at it. But don't ask me to decide for you.

RUTH. (*Turning to look at* ANDREW—*in a tone of fierce resentment.*) Yes, go, Andy! (*She turns quickly away again. There is a moment of embarrassed silence.*)

ANDREW. (*Thoughtfully.*) Yes, I guess I will. It'll be the best thing for all of us in the end, don't you think so, Rob? (ROBERT *nods but remains silent.*)

SCOTT. (*Getting to his feet.*) Then, that's settled.

ANDREW. (*Now that he has definitely made a decision his voice rings with hopeful strength and energy.*) Yes, I'll take the berth. The sooner I go the sooner I'll be back, that's a certainty; and I won't come back with empty hands next time. You bet I won't!

SCOTT. You ain't got so much time, Andy. To make sure you'd best leave here soon's you kin. I got to get right back aboard. You'd best come with me.

ANDREW. I'll go to the house and repack my bag right away.

ROBERT. (*Quietly.*) You'll both be here for dinner, won't you?

ANDREW. I don't know. Will there be time? What time is it now, I wonder?

ROBERT. (*Reproachfully.*) Ma's been getting dinner especially for you, Andy.

ANDREW. (*Flushing — shamefacedly.*) Hell! And I was forgetting! Of course I'll stay for dinner if I missed every damned ship in the world. (*He turns to the* CAPTAIN—*briskly.*) Come on, Uncle. Walk down with me to the house and you can tell me more about this berth on the way. I've got to pack before dinner. (*He and the* CAPTAIN *start down to the left.* ANDREW *calls back over his shoulder.*) You're coming soon, aren't you, Rob?

ROBERT. Yes. I'll be right down. (ANDREW *and the* CAPTAIN *leave.* RUTH *puts* MARY *on the ground and hides her face in her hands. Her shoulders shake as if she were sobbing.* ROBERT *stares at her with a grim, somber expression.* MARY *walks backward toward* ROBERT, *her wondering eyes fixed on her mother.*)

MARY. (*Her voice vaguely frightened, taking her father's hand.*) Dada, Mama's cryin', Dada.

ROBERT. (*Bending down and stroking her hair—in a voice he endeavors to keep from being harsh.*) No, she isn't, little girl. The sun hurts her eyes, that's all. Aren't you beginning to feel hungry, Mary?

MARY. (*Decidedly.*) Yes, Dada.

ROBERT. (*Meaningly.*) It must be your dinner time now.

RUTH. (*In a muffled voice.*) I'm coming, Mary. (*She wipes her eyes quickly and, without looking at* ROBERT, *comes and takes* MARY'S *hand—in a dead voice.*) Come on and I'll get your dinner for you. (*She walks out left, her eyes fixed on the ground, the skipping* MARY *tugging at her hand.* ROBERT *waits a moment for them to get ahead and then slowly follows as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

SCENE. *Same as Act Two, Scene One—The sitting room of the farm house about six o'clock in the morning of a day to-*

ward the end of October five years later. It is not yet dawn, but as the action progresses the darkness outside the windows gradually fades to gray.

The room, seen by the light of the shadeless oil lamp with a smoky chimney which stands on the table, presents an appearance of decay, of dissolution. The curtains at the windows are torn and dirty and one of them is missing. The closed desk is gray with accumulated dust as if it had not been used in years. Blotches of dampness disfigure the wall paper. Threadbare trails, leading to the kitchen and outer doors, show in the faded carpet. The top of the coverless table is stained with the imprints of hot dishes and spilled food. The rung of one rocker has been clumsily mended with a piece of plain board. A brown coating of rust covers the unblacked stove. A pile of wood is stacked up carelessly against the wall by the stove.

The whole atmosphere of the room, contrasted with that of former years, is one of an habitual poverty too hopelessly resigned to be any longer ashamed or even conscious of itself.

At the rise of the curtain RUTH *is discovered sitting by the stove, with hands outstretched to the warmth as if the air in the room were damp and cold. A heavy shawl is wrapped about her shoulders, half-concealing her dress of deep mourning. She has aged horribly. Her pale, deeply lined face has the stony lack of expression of one to whom nothing more can ever happen, whose capacity for emotion has been exhausted. When she speaks her voice is without timbre, low and monotonous. The negligent disorder of her dress, the slovenly arrangement of her hair, now streaked with gray, her muddied shoes run down at the heel, give full evidence of the apathy in which she lives.*

Her mother is asleep in her wheel chair beside the stove toward the rear, wrapped up in a blanket.

There is a sound from the open bedroom door in the rear as if someone were getting out of bed. RUTH *turns in that direction with a look of dull annoyance. A moment later* ROBERT *appears in the doorway, leaning weakly against it for support. His hair is long and unkempt, his face and body emaciated. There are bright patches of crimson over his cheek bones and his eyes are burning with fever. He is dressed in corduroy pants, a flannel shirt, and wears worn carpet slippers on his bare feet.*

RUTH. (*Dully.*) S-s-s-h! Ma's asleep.

ROBERT. (*Speaking with an effort.*) won't wake her. (*He walks weakly t a rocker by the side of the table and sink down in it exhausted.*)

RUTH. (*Staring at the stove.*) You bet ter come near the fire where it's warm

ROBERT. No. I'm burning up now.

RUTH. That's the fever. You know th doctor told you not to get up and mov around.

ROBERT. (*Irritably.*) That old fossil He doesn't know anything. Go to bed and stay there—that's his only prescrip tion.

RUTH. (*Indifferently.*) How are yo feeling now?

ROBERT. (*Buoyantly.*) Better! Muc better than I've felt in ages. Really I'm fine now—only very weak. It's th turning point, I guess. From now o I'll pick up so quick I'll surprise you— and no thanks to that old fool of country quack, either.

RUTH. He's always tended to us.

ROBERT. Always helped us to die, yo mean! He "tended" to Pa and Ma an —(*his voice breaks*)—and to—Mary

RUTH. (*Dully.*) He did the best h knew, I s'pose. (*After a pause.*) Wel Andy's bringing a specialist with hi when he comes. That ought to suit yo

ROBERT. (*Bitterly.*) Is that why you'r waiting up all night?

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. For Andy?

RUTH. (*Without a trace of feeling.*) Somebody had got to. It's only righ for someone to meet him after he's bee gone five years.

ROBERT. (*With bitter mockery.*) Fiv years! It's a long time.

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. (*Meaningly.*) To *wait!*

RUTH. (*Indifferently.*) It's past now.

ROBERT. Yes, it's past. (*After a pause.*) Have you got his two telegrams wit you? (*Ruth nods.*) Let me see them will you? My head was so full of feve when they came I couldn't make head o tail to them. (*Hastily.*) But I'm feel ing fine now. Let me read them again (RUTH *takes them from the bosom of he dress and hands them to him.*)

RUTH. Here. The first one's on top.

BERT. (*Opening it.*) New York. Just landed from steamer. Have important business to wind up here. Will be home as soon as deal is completed." (*He smiles bitterly.*) Business first was always Andy's motto. (*He reads.*) "Hope you are all well. Andy." (*He repeats ironically.*) "Hope you are all well!"

TH. (*Dully.*) He couldn't know you'd been took sick till I answered that and told him.

BERT. (*Contritely.*) Of course he couldn't. I'm a fool. I'm touchy about nothing lately. Just what did you say in your reply?

TH. (*Inconsequentially.*) I had to send it collect.

BERT. (*Irritably.*) What did you say was the matter with me?

TH. I wrote you had lung trouble.

BERT. (*Flying into a petty temper.*) You *are* a fool! How often have I explained to you that it's *pleurisy* is the matter with me. You can't seem to get it in your head that the pleura is outside the lungs, not in them!

TH. (*Callously.*) I only wrote what Doctor Smith told me.

BERT. (*Angrily.*) He's a damned ignoramus!

TH. (*Dully.*) Makes no difference. I had to tell Andy something, didn't I?

BERT. (*After a pause, opening the other telegram.*) He sent this last evening. Let's see. (*He reads.*) "Leave for home on midnight train. Just received your wire. Am bringing specialist to see Rob. Will motor to farm from Port." (*He calculates.*) What time is it now?

TH. Round six, must be.

BERT. He ought to be here soon. I'm glad he's bringing a doctor who knows something. A specialist will tell you in a second that there's nothing the matter with my lungs.

TH. (*Stolidly.*) You've been coughing an awful lot lately.

ROBERT. (*Irritably.*) What nonsense! For God's sake, haven't you ever had a bad cold yourself? (RUTH *stares at the stove in silence.* ROBERT *fidgets in his chair. There is a pause. Finally* ROBERT'S *eyes are fixed on the sleeping* MRS. ATKINS.) Your mother is lucky to be able to sleep so soundly.

RUTH. Ma's tired. She's been sitting up with me most of the night.

ROBERT. (*Mockingly.*) Is she waiting for Andy, too? (*There is a pause.* ROBERT *sighs.*) I couldn't get to sleep to save my soul. I counted ten million sheep if I counted one. No use! I gave up trying finally and just laid there in the dark thinking. (*He pauses, then continues in a tone of tender sympathy.*) I was thinking about you, Ruth—of how hard these last years must have been for you. (*Appealingly.*) I'm sorry, Ruth.

RUTH. (*In a dead voice.*) I don't know. They're past now. They were hard on all of us.

ROBERT. Yes; on all of us but Andy. (*With a flash of sick jealousy.*) Andy's made a big success of himself—the kind he wanted. (*Mockingly.*) And now he's coming home to let us admire his greatness. (*Frowning—irritably.*) What am I talking about? My brain must be sick, too. (*After a pause.*) Yes, these years have been terrible for both of us. (*His voice is lowered to a trembling whisper.*) Especially the last eight months since Mary—died. (*He forces back a sob with a convulsive shudder—then breaks out in a passionate agony.*) Our last hope of happiness! I could curse God from the bottom of my soul—if there was a God! (*He is racked by a violent fit of coughing and hurriedly puts his handkerchief to his lips.*)

RUTH. (*Without looking at him.*) Mary's better off—being dead.

ROBERT. (*Gloomily.*) We'd all be better off for that matter. (*With a sudden exasperation.*) You tell that mother of yours she's got to stop saying that Mary's death was due to a weak constitution inherited from me. (*On the verge of tears of weakness.*) It's got to stop, I tell you!

RUTH. (*Sharply.*) S-h-h! You'll wake her; and then she'll nag at me—not you.

ROBERT. (*Coughs and lies back in his chair weakly—a pause.*) It's all because your mother's down on me for not begging Andy for help.

RUTH. (*Resentfully.*) You might have. He's got plenty.

ROBERT. How can *you* of all people think of taking money from *him?*

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I don't see the harm. He's your own brother.

ROBERT. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) What's the use of talking to you? Well, *I* couldn't. (*Proudly.*) And I've managed to keep things going, thank God.

You can't deny that without help I've succeeded in— (*He breaks off with a bitter laugh.*) My God, what am I boasting of? Debts to this one and that, taxes, interest unpaid! I'm a fool! (*He lies back in his chair closing his eyes for a moment, then speaks in a low voice.*) I'll be frank, Ruth. I've been an utter failure, and I've dragged you with me. I couldn't blame you in all justice—for hating me.

RUTH. (*Without feeling.*) I don't hate you. It's been my fault too, I s'pose.

ROBERT. No. You couldn't help loving —Andy.

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I don't love anyone.

ROBERT. (*Waving her remark aside.*) You needn't deny it. It doesn't matter. (*After a pause—with a tender smile.*) Do you know Ruth, what I've been dreaming back there in the dark? (*With a short laugh.*) I was planning our future when I get well. (*He looks at her with appealing eyes as if afraid she will sneer at him. Her expression does not change. She stares at the stove. His voice takes on a note of eagerness.*) After all, why shouldn't we have a future? We're young yet. If we can only shake off the curse of this farm! It's the farm that's ruined our lives, damn it! And now that Andy's coming back—I'm going to sink my foolish pride, Ruth! I'll borrow the money from him to give us a good start in the city. We'll go where people live instead of stagnating, and start all over again. (*Confidently.*) I won't be the failure there that I've been here, Ruth. You won't need to be ashamed of me there. I'll prove to you the reading I've done can be put to some use. (*Vaguely.*) I'll write, or something of that sort. I've always wanted to write. (*Pleadingly.*) You'll want to do that, won't you, Ruth?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) There's Ma.

ROBERT. She can come with us.

RUTH. She wouldn't.

ROBERT. (*Angrily.*) So that's your answer! (*He trembles with violent passion. His voice is so strange that* RUTH *turns to look at him in alarm.*) You're lying, Ruth! Your mother's just an excuse. You want to stay here. You think that because Andy's coming back that— (*He chokes and has an attack of coughing.*)

RUTH. (*Getting up—in a frightened voice.*) What's the matter? (*She goes to him.*) I'll go with you, Rob. Stop that coughing for goodness' sake! It's awful bad for you. (*She soothes him in dull tones.*) I'll go with you to the city—soon's you're well again. Honest I will, Rob, I promise! (ROB *lies back and closes his eyes. She stands looking down at him anxiously.*) Do you feel better now?

ROBERT. Yes. (RUTH *goes back to her chair. After a pause he opens his eyes and sits up in his chair. His face is flushed and happy.*) Then you *will* go, Ruth?

RUTH. Yes.

ROBERT. (Excitedly.) We'll make a new start, Ruth—just you and I. Life owes us some happiness after what we've been through. (*Vehemently.*) It must! Otherwise our suffering would be meaningless—and that is unthinkable.

RUTH. (*Worried by his excitement.*) Yes, yes, of course, Rob, but you mustn't—

ROBERT. Oh, don't be afraid. I feel completely well, really I do—now that I can hope again. Oh if you knew how glorious it feels to have something to look forward to! Can't you feel the thrill of it, too—the vision of a new life opening up after all the horrible years?

RUTH. Yes, yes, but do be—

ROBERT. Nonsense! I won't be careful. I'm getting back all my strength. (*He gets lightly to his feet.*) See! I feel light as a feather. (*He walks to her chair and bends down to kiss her smilingly.*) One kiss—the first in years, isn't it?—to greet the dawn of a new life together.

RUTH. (*Submitting to his kiss—worriedly.*) Sit down, Rob, for goodness' sake!

ROBERT. (*With tender obstinacy—stroking her hair.*) I won't sit down. You're silly to worry. (*He rests one hand on the back of her chair.*) Listen. All our suffering has been a test through which we had to pass to prove ourselves worthy of a finer realization. (*Exultingly.*) And we did pass through it! It hasn't broken us! And now the dream is to come true! Don't you see?

RUTH. (*Looking at him with frightened eyes as if she thought he had gone mad.*) Yes, Rob, I see; but won't you go back to bed now and rest?

ROBERT. No. I'm going to see the su

ise. It's an augury of good fortune. (*He goes quickly to the window in the rear left, and pushing the curtains aside, stands looking out.* RUTH springs to her feet and comes quickly to the table, left, where she remains watching ROBERT in a tense, expectant attitude. *As he peers out his body seems gradually to sag, to grow limp and tired. His voice is mournful as he speaks.*) No sun yet. It isn't time. All I can see is the black rim of the damned hills outlined against a creeping grayness. (*He turns around; letting the curtains fall back, stretching a hand out to the wall to support himself. His false strength of a moment has evaporated leaving his face drawn and hollow eyed. He makes a pitiful attempt to smile.*) That's not a very happy augury, is it? But the sun'll come—soon. (*He sways weakly.*)

UTH. (*Hurrying to his side and supporting him.*) Please go to bed, won't you, Rob? You don't want to be all wore out when the specialist comes, do you?

OBERT. (*Quickly.*) No. That's right. He mustn't think I'm sicker than I am. And I feel as if I could sleep now—(*Cheerfully*)—a good, sound, restful sleep.

UTH. (*Helping him to the bedroom door.*) That's what you need most. (*They go inside. A moment later she reappears calling back.*) I'll shut this door so's you'll be quiet. (*She closes the door and goes quickly to her mother and shakes her by the shoulder.*) Ma! Ma! Wake up!

RS. ATKINS. (*Coming out of her sleep with a start.*) Glory be! What's the matter with you?

UTH. It was Rob. He's just been talking to me out here. I put him back to bed. (*Now that she is sure her mother is awake her fear passes and she relapses into dull indifference. She sits down in her chair and stares at the stove—dully.*) He acted—funny; and his eyes looked so —so wild like.

RS. ATKINS. (*With asperity.*) And is that all you woke me out of a sound sleep for, and scared me near out of my wits?

UTH. I was afraid. He talked so crazy. I couldn't quiet him. I didn't want to be alone with him that way. Lord knows what he might do.

RS. ATKINS. (*Scornfully.*) Humph! A help I'd be to you and me not able to move a step! Why didn't you run and get Jake?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) Jake isn't here. He quit last night. He hasn't been paid in three months.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Indignantly.*) I can't blame him. What decent person'd want to work on a place like this? (*With sudden exasperation.*) Oh, I wish you'd never married that man!

RUTH. (*Wearily.*) You oughtn't to talk about him now when he's sick in his bed.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Working herself into a fit of rage.*) You know very well Ruth Mayo, if it wasn't for me helpin' you on the sly out of my savin's, you'd both been in the poor house—and all 'count of his pigheaded pride in not lettin' Andy know the state thin's were in. A nice thin' for me to have to support him out of what I'd saved for my last days—and me an invalid with no one to look to!

RUTH. Andy'll pay you back, Ma. I can tell him so's Rob'll never know.

MRS. ATKINS. (*With a snort.*) What'd Rob think you and him was livin' on, I'd like to know?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) He didn't think about it, I s'pose. (*After a slight pause.*) He said he'd made up his mind to ask Andy for help when he comes. (*As a clock in the kitchen strikes six.*) Six o'clock. Andy ought to get here directly.

MRS. ATKINS. D'you think this special doctor'll do Rob any good?

RUTH. (*Hopelessly.*) I don't know. (*The two women remain silent for a time staring dejectedly at the stove.*)

MRS. ATKINS. (*Shivering irritably.*) For goodness' sake put some wood on that fire. I'm most freezin'!

RUTH. (*Pointing to the door in the rear.*) Don't talk so loud. Let him sleep if he can. (*She gets wearily from the chair and puts a few pieces of wood in the stove.*) This is the last of the wood. I don't know who'll cut more now that Jake's left. (*She sighs and walks to the window in the rear, left, pulls the curtains aside, and looks out.*) It's getting gray out. (*She comes back to the stove.*) Looks like it'd be a nice day. (*She stretches out her hands to warm them.*) Must've been a heavy frost last night. We're paying for the spell of warm weather we've been having. (*The throbbing whine of a motor sounds from the distance outside.*)

MRS. ATKINS. (*Sharply.*) S-h-h! Listen. Ain't that an auto I hear?

RUTH. (*Without interest.*) Yes. It's Andy, I s'pose.

MRS. ATKINS. (*With nervous irritation.*) Don't sit there like a silly goose. Look at the state of this room! What'll this strange doctor think of us? Look at that lamp chimney all smoke! Gracious sakes, Ruth—

RUTH. (*Indifferently.*) I've got a lamp all cleaned up in the kitchen.

MRS. ATKINS. (*Peremptorily.*) Wheel me in there this minute. I don't want him to see me looking a sight. I'll lay down in the room the other side. You don't need me now and I'm dead for sleep. (RUTH *wheels her mother off right. The noise of the motor grows louder, and finally ceases as the car stops on the road before the farm house.* RUTH *returns from the kitchen with a lighted lamp in her hand which she sets on the table beside the other. The sound of footsteps on the path is heard—then a sharp rap on the door.* RUTH *goes and opens it.* ANDREW *enters, followed by* DOCTOR FAWCETT *carrying a small black bag.* ANDREW *has changed greatly. His face seems to have grown highstrung, hardened by the look of decisiveness which comes from being constantly under a strain where judgments on the spur of the moment are compelled to be accurate. His eyes are keener and more alert. There is even a suggestion of ruthless cunning about them. At present, however, his expression is one of tense anxiety.* DOCTOR FAWCETT *is a short, dark, middle-aged man with a Vandyke beard. He wears glasses.*)

RUTH. Hello, Andy! I've been waiting—

ANDREW. (*Kissing her hastily.*) I got here as soon as I could. (*He throws off his cap and heavy overcoat on the table, introducing* RUTH *and the* DOCTOR *as he does so. He is dressed in an expensive business suit and appears stouter.*) My sister-in-law, Mrs. Mayo—Doctor Fawcett. (*They bow to each other silently.* ANDREW *casts a quick glance about the room.*) Where's Rob?

RUTH. (*Pointing.*) In there.

ANDREW. I'll take your coat and hat, Doctor. (*As he helps the* DOCTOR *with his things.*) Is he very bad, Ruth?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) He's been getting weaker.

ANDREW. Damn! This way, Doctor. Bring the lamp, Ruth. (*He goes into the bedroom, followed by the* DOCTOR *and* RUTH *carrying the clean lamp.* RUTH *reappears almost immediately, closing the door behind her, and goes slowly to the outside door, which she opens, and stands in the doorway looking out. The sound of* ANDREW'S *and* ROBERT'S *voices comes from the bedroom. A moment later* ANDREW *re-enters, closing the door softly. He comes forward and sinks down in the rocker on the right of table, leaning his head on his hand. His face is drawn in a shocked expression of great grief. He sighs heavily, staring mournfully in front of him.* RUTH *turns and stands watching him. Then she shuts the door and returns to her chair by the stove, turning it so she can face him.*)

ANDREW. (*Glancing up quickly—in a harsh voice.*) How long has this been going on?

RUTH. You mean—how long has he been sick?

ANDREW. (*Shortly.*) Of course! What else?

RUTH. It was last summer he had a bad spell first, but he's been ailin' ever since Mary died—eight months ago.

ANDREW. (*Harshly.*) Why didn't you let me know—cable me? Do you want him to die, all of you? I'm damned if he doesn't look that way! (*His voice breaking.*) Poor old chap! To be sick in this out-of-the-way hole without any one to attend to him but a country quack! It's a damned shame!

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I wanted to send you word once, but he only got mad when I told him. He was too proud to ask anything, he said.

ANDREW. Proud? To ask *me?* (*He jumps to his feet and paces nervously back and forth.*) I can't understand the way you've acted. Didn't you see how sick he was getting? Couldn't you realize—why, I nearly dropped in my tracks when I saw him! He looks (*He shudders*)—terrible! (*With fierce scorn.*) I suppose you're so used to the idea of his being delicate that you take his sickness as a matter of course. God, if I'd only known!

RUTH. (*Without emotion.*) A letter takes so long to get where you were—and we couldn't afford to telegraph. We owe everyone already, and I couldn't ask Rob

She'd been giving me money out of her savings till she hadn't much left. Don't say anything to Rob about it. I never told him. He'd only be mad at me if he knew. But I had to, because—God knows how we'd have got on if I hadn't.

NDREW. You mean to say— (*His eyes seem to take in the poverty-stricken appearance of the room for the first time.*) You sent that telegram to me collect. Was it because— (RUTH *nods silently.* ANDREW *pounds on the table with his fist.*) Good God! And all this time I've been—why I've had everything! (*He sits down in his chair and pulls it close to* RUTH'S—*impulsively.*) But—I can't get it through my head. Why? Why? What has happened? How did it ever come about? Tell me!

UTH. (*Dully.*) There's nothing much to tell. Things kept getting worse, that's all—and Rob didn't seem to care. He never took any interest since way back when your Ma died. After that he got men to take charge, and they nearly all cheated him—he couldn't tell—and left one after another. Then after Mary died he didn't pay no heed to anything any more—just stayed indoors and took to reading books again. So I had to ask Ma if she wouldn't help us some.

NDREW. (*Surprised and horrified.*) Why, damn it, this is frightful! Rob must be mad not to have let me know. Too proud to ask help of *me!* What's the matter with him in God's name? (*A sudden, horrible suspicion entering his mind.*) Ruth! Tell me the truth. His mind hasn't gone back on him, has it?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I don't know. Mary's dying broke him up terrible—but he's used to her being gone by this, I s'pose.

ANDREW. (*Looking at her queerly.*) Do you mean to say *you're* used to it?

RUTH. (*In a dead tone.*) There's a time comes—when you don't mind any more—anything.

ANDREW. (*Looks at her fixedly for a moment—with great pity.*) I'm sorry, Ruth—if I seemed to blame you. I didn't realize— The sight of Rob lying in bed there, so gone to pieces—it made me furious at everyone. Forgive me, Ruth.

RUTH. There's nothing to forgive. It doesn't matter.

ANDREW. (*Springing to his feet again and pacing up and down.*) Thank God I came back before it was too late. This doctor will know exactly what to do. That's the first thing to think of. When Rob's on his feet again we can get the farm working on a sound basis once more. I'll see to that—before I leave.

RUTH. You're going away again?

ANDREW. I've got to.

RUTH. You wrote Rob you was coming back to stay this time.

ANDREW. I expected to—until I got to New York. Then I learned certain facts that make it necessary. (*With a short laugh.*) To be candid, Ruth, I'm not the rich man you've probably been led to believe by my letters—not now. I was when I wrote them. I made money hand over fist as long as I stuck to legitimate trading; but I wasn't content with that. I wanted it to come easier, so like all the rest of the idiots, I tried speculation. Oh, I won all right! Several times I've been almost a millionaire—on paper—and then come down to earth again with a bump. Finally the strain was too much. I got disgusted with myself and made up my mind to get out and come home and forget it and really live again. (*He gives a harsh laugh.*) And now comes the funny part. The day before the steamer sailed I saw what I thought was a chance to become a millionaire again. (*He snaps his fingers.*) That easy! I plunged. Then, before things broke, I left—I was so confident I couldn't be wrong. But when I landed in New York—I wired you I had business to wind up, didn't I? Well, it was the business that wound me up! (*He smiles grimly, pacing up and down, his hands in his pockets.*)

RUTH. (*Dully.*) You found—you'd lost everything?

ANDREW. (*Sitting down again.*) Practically. (*He takes a cigar from his pocket, bites the end off, and lights it.*) Oh, I don't mean I'm dead broke. I've saved ten thousand from the wreckage, maybe twenty. But that's a poor showing for five years' hard work. That's why I'll have to go back. (*Confidently.*) I can make it up in a year or so down there—and I don't need but a shoestring to start with. (*A weary expression comes over his face and he sighs heavily.*) I wish I didn't have to. I'm sick of it all.

RUTH. It's too bad—things seem to go wrong so.

ANDREW. (*Shaking off his depression—briskly.*) They might be much worse. There's enough left to fix the farm O. K. before I go. I won't leave 'til Rob's on his feet again. In the meantime I'll make things fly around here. (*With satisfaction.*) I need a rest, and the kind of rest I need is hard work in the open—just like I used to do in the old days. (*Stopping abruptly and lowering his voice cautiously.*) Not a word to Rob about my losing money! Remember that, Ruth! You can see why. If he's grown so touchy he'd never accept a cent if he thought I was hard up; see?

RUTH. Yes, Andy. (*After a pause, during which* ANDREW *puffs at his cigar abstractedly, his mind evidently busy with plans for the future, the bedroom door is opened and* DOCTOR FAWCETT *enters, carrying a bag. He closes the door quietly behind him and comes forward, a grave expression on his face.* ANDREW *springs out of his chair.*)

ANDREW. Ah, Doctor! (*He pushes a chair between his own and* RUTH'S.) Won't you have a chair?

FAWCETT. (*Glancing at his watch.*) I must catch the nine o'clock back to the city. It's imperative. I have only a moment. (*Sitting down and clearing his throat—in a perfunctory, impersonal voice.*) The case of your brother, Mr. Mayo, is— (*He stops and glances at* RUTH *and says meaningly to* ANDREW.) Perhaps it would be better if you and I—

RUTH. (*With dogged resentment.*) I know what you mean, Doctor. (*Dully.*) Don't be afraid I can't stand it. I'm used to bearing trouble by this; and I can guess what you've found out. (*She hesitates for a moment—then continues in a monotonous voice.*) Rob's going to die.

ANDREW. (*Angrily.*) Ruth!

FAWCETT. (*Raising his hand as if to command silence.*) I am afraid my diagnosis of your brother's condition forces me to the same conclusion as Mrs. Mayo's.

ANDREW. (*Groaning.*) But, Doctor, surely—

FAWCETT. (*Calmly.*) Your brother hasn't long to live—perhaps a few days, perhaps only a few hours. It's a marvel that he's alive at this moment. My examination revealed that both of his lungs are terribly affected.

ANDREW. (*Brokenly.*) Good God! (RUTH *keeps her eyes fixed on her lap in a trance-like stare.*)

FAWCETT. I am sorry to have to tell you this. If there was anything that could be done—

ANDREW. There isn't anything?

FAWCETT. (*Shaking his head.*) It's too late. Six months ago there might have—

ANDREW. (*In anguish.*) But if we were to take him to the mountains—or to Arizona—or—

FAWCETT. That might have prolonged his life six months ago. (ANDREW *groans.*) But now— (*He shrugs his shoulders significantly.*)

ANDREW. (*Appalled by a sudden thought.*) Good heavens, you haven't told him this have you, Doctor?

FAWCETT. No. I lied to him. I said a change of climate— (*He looks at his watch again nervously.*) I must leave you. (*He gets up.*)

ANDREW. (*Getting to his feet—insistently.*) But there must still be some chance—

FAWCETT. (*As if he were reassuring a child.*) There is always that last chance—the miracle. (*He puts on his hat and coat—bowing to* RUTH.) Good-by, Mrs. Mayo.

RUTH. (*Without raising her eyes—dully.*) Good-by.

ANDREW. (*Mechanically.*) I'll walk to the car with you, Doctor. (*They go out of the door.* RUTH *sits motionless. The motor is heard starting and the noise gradually recedes into the distance.* ANDREW *re-enters and sits down in his chair holding his head in his hands.*) Ruth! (*She lifts her eyes to his.*) Hadn't we better go in and see him? God! I'm afraid to! I know he'll read it in my face. (*The bedroom door is noiselessly opened and* ROBERT *appears in the doorway. His cheeks are flushed with fever and his eyes appear unusually large and brilliant.* ANDREW *continues with a groan.*) It can't be, Ruth. It can't be as hopeless as he said. There's always a fighting chance. We'll take Rob to Arizona. He's *got* to get well. There *must* be a chance!

ROBERT. (*In a gentle tone.*) Why must there, Andy? (RUTH *turns and stares at him with terrified eyes.*)

ANDREW. (*Whirling around.*) Rob! (*Scoldingly.*) What are you doing out

of bed? (*He gets up and goes to him.*) Get right back now and obey the Doc, or you're going to get a licking from me!

ROBERT. (*Ignoring these remarks.*) Help me over to the chair, please, Andy.

ANDREW. Like hell I will! You're going right back to bed, that's where you're going, and stay there! (*He takes hold of* ROBERT'S *arm.*)

ROBERT. (*Mockingly.*) Stay there 'til I die, eh, Andy? (*Coldly.*) Don't behave like a child. I'm sick of lying down. I'll be more rested sitting up. (*As* ANDREW *hesitates—violently.*) I swear I'll get out of bed every time you put me there. You'll have to sit on my chest, and that wouldn't help my health any. Come on, Andy. Don't play the fool. I want to talk to you, and I'm going to. (*With a grim smile.*) A dying man has some rights, hasn't he?

ANDREW. (*With a shudder.*) Don't talk that way, for God's sake! I'll only let you sit down if you'll promise that. Remember. (*He helps* ROBERT *to the chair between his own and* RUTH'S.) Easy now! There you are! Wait, and I'll get a pillow for you. (*He goes into the bedroom.* ROBERT *looks at* RUTH *who shrinks away from him in terror.* ROBERT *smiles bitterly.* ANDREW *comes back with the pillow which he places behind* ROBERT'S *back.*) How's that?

ROBERT. (*With an affectionate smile.*) Fine! Thank you! (*As* ANDREW *sits down.*) Listen, Andy. You've asked me not to talk—and I won't after I've made my position clear. (*Slowly.*) In the first place I know I'm dying. (RUTH *bows her head and covers her face with her hands. She remains like this all during the scene between the two brothers.*)

ANDREW. Rob! That isn't so!

ROBERT. (*Wearily.*) It *is* so! Don't lie to me. After Ruth put me to bed before you came, I saw it clearly for the first time. (*Bitterly.*) I'd been making plans for our future—Ruth's and mine—so it came hard at first—the realization. Then when the doctor examined me, I knew—although he tried to lie about it. And then to make sure I listened at the door to what he told you. So don't mock me with fairy tales about Arizona, or any such rot as that. Because I'm dying is no reason you should treat me as an imbecile or a coward. Now that I'm sure what's happening I can say Kismet to it with all my heart. It was only the silly uncertainty that hurt. (*There is a pause.* ANDREW *looks around in impotent anguish, not knowing what to say.* ROBERT *regards him with an affectionate smile.*)

ANDREW. (*Finally blurts out.*) It isn't foolish. You *have* got a chance. If you heard all the Doctor said that ought to prove it to you.

ROBERT. Oh, you mean when he spoke of the miracle? (*Dryly.*) I don't believe in miracles—in my case. Besides, I know more than any doctor on earth *could* know—because I *feel* what's coming. (*Dismissing the subject.*) But we've agreed not to talk of it. Tell me about yourself, Andy. That's what I'm interested in. Your letters were too brief and far apart to be illuminating.

ANDREW. I meant to write oftener.

ROBERT. (*With a faint trace of irony.*) I judge from them you've accomplished all you set out to do five years ago?

ANDREW. That isn't much to boast of.

ROBERT. (*Surprised.*) Have you really, honestly reached that conclusion?

ANDREW. Well, it doesn't seem to amount to much now.

ROBERT. But you're rich, aren't you?

ANDREW. (*With a quick glance at* RUTH.) Yes, I s'pose so.

ROBERT. I'm glad. You can do to the farm all I've undone. But what did you do down there? Tell me. You went in the grain business with that friend of yours?

ANDREW. Yes. After two years I had a share in it. I sold out last year. (*He is answering* ROBERT'S *questions with great reluctance.*)

ROBERT. And then?

ANDREW. I went in on my own.

ROBERT. Still in grain?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. What's the matter? You look as if I were accusing you of something.

ANDREW. I'm proud enough of the first four years. It's after that I'm not boasting of. I took to speculating.

ROBERT. In wheat?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. And you made money—gambling?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. (*Thoughtfully.*) I've been wondering what the great change was in you. (*After a pause.*) You—a farmer—to gamble in a wheat pit with scraps of pa-

per. There's a spiritual significance in that picture, Andy. (*He smiles bitterly.*) I'm a failure, and Ruth's another—but we can both justly lay some of the blame for our stumbling on God. But you're the deepest-dyed failure of the three, Andy. You've spent eight years running away from yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now— (*He stops as if seeking vainly for words.*) My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray— So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back— (*His voice grows weaker and he sighs wearily.*) It's no use. I can't say it. (*He lies back and closes his eyes, breathing pantingly.*)

ANDREW. (*Slowly.*) I think I know what you're driving at, Rob—and it's true, I guess. (ROBERT *smiles gratefully and stretches out his hand, which* ANDREW *takes in his.*)

ROBERT. I want you to promise me to do one thing, Andy, after—

ANDREW. I'll promise anything, as God is my Judge!

ROBERT. Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share. (*His voice faltering with weakness.*) Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you—awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth—afterwards.

RUTH. (*With a cry.*) Rob! (ROBERT *lies back, his eyes closed, gasping heavily for breath.*)

ANDREW. (*Making signs to her to humor him—gently.*) You're tired out, Rob. You better lie down and rest a while, don't you think? We can talk later on.

ROBERT. (*With a mocking smile.*) Later on! You always were an optimist, Andy! (*He sighs with exhaustion.*) Yes, I'll go and rest a while. (*As* ANDREW *comes to help him.*) It must be near sunrise, isn't it?

ANDREW. It's after six.

ROBERT. (*As* ANDREW *helps him into the bedroom.*) Shut the door, Andy. I want to be alone. (ANDREW *reappears and shuts the door softly. He comes and sits down on his chair again, supporting his head on his hands. His face is drawn with the intensity of his dry-eyed anguish.*)

RUTH. (*Glancing at him—fearfully.*) He's out of his mind now, isn't he?

ANDREW. He may be a little delirious. The fever would do that. (*With impotent rage.*) God, what a shame! And there's nothing we can do but sit and—wait! (*He springs from his chair and walks to the stove.*)

RUTH. (*Dully.*) He was talking—wild—like he used to—only this time it sounded—unnatural, don't you think?

ANDREW. I don't know. The things he said to me had truth in them—even if he did talk them way up in the air, like he always sees things. Still— (*He glances down at* RUTH *keenly.*) Why do you suppose he wanted us to promise we'd—(*Confusedly.*) You know what he said.

RUTH. (*Dully.*) His mind was wandering, I s'pose.

ANDREW. (*With conviction.*) No—there was something back of it.

RUTH. He wanted to make sure I'd be all right—after he'd gone, I expect.

ANDREW. No, it wasn't that. He knows very well I'd naturally look after you without—anything like that.

RUTH. He might be thinking of—something happened five years back, the time you came home from the trip.

ANDREW. What happened? What do you mean?

RUTH. (*Dully.*) We had a fight.

ANDREW. A fight? What has that to do with me?

RUTH. It was about you—in a way.

ANDREW. (*Amazed.*) About *me?*

RUTH. Yes, mostly. You see I'd found out I'd made a mistake about Rob soon after we were married—when it was too late.

ANDREW. Mistake? (*Slowly.*) You mean—you found out you didn't love Rob?

RUTH. Yes.

ANDREW. Good God!

RUTH. And then I thought that when Mary came it'd be different, and I'd love him; but it didn't happen that way. And I couldn't bear with his blundering and book-reading—and I grew to hate him, almost.

ANDREW. Ruth!

RUTH. I couldn't help it. No woman could. It had to be because I loved someone else, I'd found out. (*She sighs wearily.*) It can't do no harm to tell you now—when it's all past and gone—and dead. *You* were the one I really loved—

hly I didn't come to the knowledge of it il too late.

DREW. (*Stunned.*) Ruth! Do you now what you're saying?

TH. It was true—then. (*With sudden erceness.*) How could I help it? No oman could.

DREW. Then—you loved me—that time came home?

TH. (*Doggedly.*) I'd known your real eason for leaving home the first time—verybody knew it—and for three years 'd been thinking—

DREW. That I loved you?

TH. Yes. Then that day on the hill ou laughed about what a fool you'd been or loving me once—and I knew it was ll over.

DREW. Good God, but I never thought — (*He stops, shuddering at his remembrance.*) And did Rob—

TH. That was what I'd started to tell. We'd had a fight just before you came and I got crazy mad—and I told him all I've told you.

NDREW. (*Gaping at her speechlessly for a moment.*) You told Rob—you loved me?

TH. Yes.

NDREW. (*Shrinking away from her in horror.*) You—you—you mad fool, you! How could you do such a thing?

UTH. I couldn't help it. I'd got to the end of bearing things—without talking.

NDREW. Then Rob must have known every moment I stayed here! And yet he never said or showed— God, how he must have suffered! Didn't you know how much he loved you?

UTH. (*Dully.*) Yes. I knew he liked me.

NDREW. Liked you! What kind of a woman are you? Couldn't you have kept silent? Did you have to torture him? No wonder he's dying! And you've lived together for five years with this between you?

UTH. We've lived in the same house.

NDREW. Does he still think—

UTH. I don't know. We've never spoke a word about it since that day. Maybe, from the way he went on, he s'poses I care for you yet.

NDREW. But you don't. It's outrageous. It's stupid! You don't love me!

UTH. (*Slowly.*) I wouldn't know how to feel love, even if I tried, any more.

NDREW. (*Brutally.*) And I don't love you, that's sure! (*He sinks into his chair, his head between his hands.*) It's damnable such a thing should be between Rob and me. Why, I love Rob better'n anybody in the world and always did. There isn't a thing on God's green earth I wouldn't have done to keep trouble away from him. And I have to be the very one—it's damnable! How am I going to face him again? What can I say to him now? (*He groans with anguished rage. After a pause.*) He asked me to promise—what am I going to do?

RUTH. You can promise—so's it'll ease his mind—and not mean anything.

ANDREW. What? Lie to him now—when he's dying? (*Determinedly.*) No! It's *you* who'll have to do the lying, since it must be done. You've got a chance now to undo some of all the suffering you've brought on Rob. Go in to him! Tell him you never loved me—it was all a mistake. Tell him you only said so because you were mad and didn't know what you were saying! Tell him something, anything, that'll bring him peace!

RUTH. (*Dully.*) He wouldn't believe me.

ANDREW. (*Furiously.*) You've got to make him believe you, do you hear? You've got to—now—hurry—you never know when it may be too late. (*As she hesitates—imploringly.*) For God's sake, Ruth! Don't you see you owe it to him? You'll never forgive yourself if you don't.

RUTH. (*Dully.*) I'll go. (*She gets wearily to her feet and walks slowly toward the bedroom.*) But it won't do any good. (ANDREW'S *eyes are fixed on her anxiously. She opens the door and steps inside the room. She remains standing there for a minute. Then she calls in a frightened voice.*) Rob! Where are you? (*Then she hurries back, trembling with fright.*) Andy! Andy! He's gone!

ANDREW. (*Misunderstanding her—his face pale with dread.*) He's not—

RUTH. (*Interrupting him—hysterically.*) He's gone! The bed's empty. The window's wide open. He must have crawled out into the yard!

ANDREW. (*Springing to his feet. He rushes into the bedroom and returns immediately with an expression of alarmed amazement on his face.*) Come! He can't have gone far! (*Grabbing his hat he takes* RUTH'S *arm and shoves her toward the door.*) Come on! (*Opening the door.*) Let's hope to God— (*The*

door closes behind them, cutting off his words as

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

ACT THREE

Scene Two

Scene. *Same as Act One, Scene One—A section of country highway. The sky to the east is already alight with bright color and a thin, quivering line of flame is spreading slowly along the horizon rim of the dark hills. The roadside, however, is still steeped in the grayness of the dawn, shadowy and vague. The field in the foreground has a wild uncultivated appearance as if it had been allowed to remain fallow the preceding summer. Parts of the snake-fence in the rear have been broken down. The apple tree is leafless and seems dead.*

Robert *staggers weakly in from the left. He stumbles into the ditch and lies there for a moment; then crawls with a great effort to the top of the bank where he can see the sun rise, and collapses weakly.* Ruth *and* Andrew *come hurriedly along the road from the left.*

Andrew. (*Stopping and looking about him.*) There he is! I knew it! I knew we'd find him here.

Robert. (*Trying to raise himself to a sitting position as they hasten to his side—with a wan smile.*) I thought I'd given you the slip.

Andrew. (*With kindly bullying.*) Well you didn't you old scoundrel, and we're going to take you right back where you belong—in bed. (*He makes a motion to lift* Robert.)

Robert. Don't, Andy. Don't, I tell you!

Andrew. You're in pain?

Robert. (*Simply.*) No. I'm dying. (*He falls back weakly.* Ruth *sinks down beside him with a sob and pillows his head on her lap.* Andrew *stands looking down at him helplessly.* Robert *moves his head restlessly on* Ruth's *lap.*) I couldn't stand it back there in the room. It seemed as if all my life—I'd been cooped in a room. So I thought I'd try to end as I might have—if I'd had the courage—alone—in a ditch by the open road—watching the sun rise.

Andrew. Rob! Don't talk. You're wasting your strength. Rest a while and then we'll carry you—

Robert. Still hoping, Andy? Don't. I know. (*There is a pause during which he breathes heavily, straining his eyes toward the horizon.*) The sun comes so slowly. (*With an ironical smile.*) The doctor told me to go to the far-off places—and I'd be cured. He was right! That was always the cure for me. It's too late—for this life—but— (*He has a fit of coughing which racks his body.*)

Andrew. (*With a hoarse sob.*) Rob! (*He clenches his fists in an impotent rage against fate.*) God! God! (Ruth *sobs brokenly and wipes* Robert's *lips with her handkerchief.*)

Robert. (*In a voice which is suddenly ringing with the happiness of hope.*) You mustn't feel sorry for me. Don't you see I'm happy at last—free—free—freed from the farm—free to wander on and on—eternally! (*He raises himself on his elbow, his face radiant, and points to the horizon.*) Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come— (*Exultantly.*) And this time I'm going! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning—the start of my voyage! I've won to my trip—the right of release—beyond the horizon! Oh, you ought to be glad—glad—for my sake! (*He collapses weakly.*) Andy! (Andrew *bends down to him.*) Remember Ruth—

Andrew. I'll take care of her, I swear to you, Rob!

Robert. Ruth has suffered—remember Andy—only through sacrifice—the secret beyond there— (*He suddenly raises himself with his last remaining strength and points to the horizon where the edge of the sun's disc is rising from the rim of the hills.*) The sun! (*He remains with his eyes fixed on it for a moment. A rattling noise throbs from his throat. He mumbles.*) Remember! (*And falls back and is still.* Ruth *gives a cry of horror and springs to her feet, shuddering, her hands over her eyes.* Andrew *bends on one knee beside the body, placing a hand over* Robert's *heart, then he kisses his brother reverentially on the forehead and stands up.*)

Andrew. (*Facing* Ruth, *the body between them—in a dead voice.*) He's dead. (*With a sudden burst of fury.*) God damn you, you never told him!

TH. (*Piteously.*) He was so happy without my lying to him.

DREW. (*Pointing to the body—trembling with the violence of his rage.*) This is your doing, you damn woman, you coward, you murderess!

TH. (*Sobbing.*) Don't, Andy! I couldn't help it—and he knew how I'd suffered, too. He told you—to remember.

DREW. (*Stares at her for a moment, his rage ebbing away, an expression of deep pity gradually coming over his face. Then he glances down at his brother and speaks brokenly in a compassionate voice.*) Forgive me, Ruth—for his sake —and I'll remember— (RUTH *lets her hands fall from her face and looks at him uncomprehendingly. He lifts his eyes to hers and forces out falteringly.*) I—you—we've both made a mess of things! We must try to help each other—and—in time—we'll come to know what's right— (*Desperately.*) And perhaps we— (*But* RUTH, *if she is aware of his words, gives no sign. She remains silent gazing at him dully with the sad humility of exhaustion, her mind already sinking back into that spent calm beyond the further troubling of any hope.*)

(*THE CURTAIN FALLS.*)

SUN-UP

BY

Lula Vollmer

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SUN-UP

Sun-Up represents the folk-play in America. During the last few years ere has been a significant movement in this country which has tried to in- rpret the life of those natives of America who have retained the primitive lture of their ancestors, and whose emotions have remained in that inartic- ate and unsophisticated state which allow them free expression and make them erefore well suited for the drama.

The folk-play has been stimulated greatly by the work of Professor Fred- ick H. Koch, both in North Dakota and in North Carolina, where plays have ien written and performed by students at the universities. On the profes- onal stage, William Gillette and Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett as early as 81 represented the North Carolina farmer in contrast with European civil- ation in *Esmeralda.* But it remained for the season of 1923–24 to witness our plays dealing with the mountaineers of North Carolina and Kentucky; *un-Up* and *The Shame Woman,* by Miss Vollmer, *This Fine-Pretty World,* Mr. Percy MacKaye, and *Hell-Bent fer Heaven,* by Mr. Hatcher Hughes.

Lula Vollmer was born in Keyser, North Carolina and was educated in piscopal Church boarding schools. She spent three years also in the Normal nd Collegiate Institute at Asheville, and her stay here was rich in contacts with ne mountain women who brought their wares to the Institute. As a school irl she wrote plays and directed her fellow pupils in them. She learned to now the mountaineers too, through personal observation on their own ground, or her father, a specialist in lumber, took his family each summer to the hill ountry. After graduation she became a reporter which led her, through her nterviews, into direct contact with actors and actresses and fostered her deter- nination to write plays. For four years she was secretary to the president and ater, for about five years, was an accountant in the Piedmont Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. During this period she wrote four plays and several short stories and onducted a column in the *Atlanta Pilot,* a theatrical paper, studying such plays s it was possible for her to see. One of her plays, *Jule,* was afterwards con- densed and produced by Miss Louise Coleman in vaudeville.

Finally she realized that a practical playwright must live in or near New York and when she came to that city the first approach to the theatre that offered was that of treasurer in the box-office of the Garrick Theatre. Before this opportunity came she had written *Sun-Up,* an anecdote which she had heard from a friend who was returning from a southern war camp in May, 1918, crystallizing her long cherished desire to place upon the stage these people of her native State. The story told of a boy, whose exclamation when he arrived at camp: "Air this hyar France?" revealed the limitations of his race. While

she began to build the play upon this boy, his mother, "the widow Cagle" be came eventually the central figure of the tragedy, and Miss Vollmer provided in her character, as interpreted by Miss LaVerne, one of the unforgettable pro ductions of our stage. But it is not only the widow Cagle and her eternal feu with "the law," which has robbed her of her father and her husband and which reaches out to take her son to fight in a cause remote from her sympathy o understanding, which provide fine dramatic material. The girl who hesitate between Rufe Cagle and Sheriff Weeks until the manhood of Rufe challenge the womanhood in her, the vividly drawn pictures of the Todds, father and son in whom the decadent quality of the mountain whites is revealed, with all los in Bud Todd except courage, these form a background against which the greate figures of mother and son stand revealed. These characters are developed b conversation which is remarkably natural and in which every word tells. Ther is hardly a line in the play which is not definitely a step in the progression o the drama. This close unity springs partly from the very nature of the mate rial, the life of a community in which the people are so closely related in thei joys and sorrows that one event affects them all and their tragedies spring ofte from their very limitation of opportunity. Yet *Sun-Up*, like *Beyond the Hori zon*, closes on a note of exaltation in which a mother's love has passed beyon the limits of life to commune for a moment with the spirit of the son she ha lost. Again Miss Vollmer's art rings true, for to such a woman as the widow Cagle, a message from the spirit world would not seem unnatural.

It is characteristic of the difficulties under which the American playwrigh labors that while Miss Vollmer was an officer of the Theatre Guild, which ha devoted its powerful energies largely to the production of foreign plays, *Sun-Up* should have been produced first by the Beechwood Players at Scarborough, New York. It was put on by Mr. Henry Stillman, who had been impressed by th play when he had been associated with the Garrick Theatre. After the pla had passed through other hands and a production had been made at Whit Plains, New York, the Players Company produced *Sun-Up*, under the directio of Mr. Stillman and Mr. Benjamin Kauser, at the Provincetown Theatre, Ma 24, 1923. It attracted at once the attention of the discriminating and ran, afte transfers to the Lenox Hill Theatre and the Princess Theatre, until May 3, 192 It was then taken to Chicago where it was played at the LaSalle Theatre unt July 12. It has been produced in Pittsburgh and Boston during the fall o 1924, and arrangements have been made for its production in London by Mis LaVerne. The Italian rights have been purchased through the Society o Italian Authors.

Miss Vollmer's next play, *The Shame Woman*, opened at the Greenwic Village Theatre, October 16, 1923 and continued after transfers to the Princes and Comedy Theatres, until June, 1924. In August it began its tour throug Chicago, Philadelphia and other cities until it closed in Buffalo in Novembe *The Shame Woman* is another tragedy laid in the North Carolina Mountain Lize Burns, a woman who has suffered all her life the shame of her early seduc

by Craig Anson, who lives in the nearby town, finds that Lily, her adopted ghter, is meeting Anson, now a middle-aged roué and in order to warn Lily, tells the story of her own career, which is represented in five scenes placed nty years earlier. To her horror she finds the warning is too late and Lily s. To save her memory from the stain that has shadowed her own life, Lize s Anson and goes to the scaffold without revealing the reason. As the play s put on, it ends in the jail, but as it was written there was a tenth scene out- e the jail. A crowd had gathered to witness the hanging, but when Lize ap- ars in the doorway, her spiritual awakening has so lifted her beyond the clutch years that it is Lize, the young woman, that they see. They bow before her; n the terrible Martha Case, the midwife begins to tremble. Miss Florence ttenhouse as Lize, Miss Dupree, as her mother, and Miss Florence Gerald, as artha Case, gave notable performances. The midwife, drawn as a brooding ure of implacable fate, is as fine a creation as anything that the Russian drama s brought to us.

The Dunce Boy, produced at Daly's Theatre, April 3, 1925, while not a pular success, contained two well-drawn characters, "Tude" Huckle, a half- t, who has his emotional nature attuned to impressions beyond the normal, d his mother, who sees in him the consequences of pre-natal influences of the eat saw mill in the North Carolina mountains.

Sun-Up was published by Brentano's, New York in 1924 in the Contempo- ary Drama Series. The editor is indebted to the courtesy of the author and the ublishers for permission to reprint the play. Information concerning the lays has been furnished by Miss Vollmer and her agent, Miss Ingersoll, and iss Vollmer has extended to the editor the privilege of reading the unacted ene from *The Shame Woman*. An interesting account of the effect of *Sun-Up* h stimulating financial support for schools which are rescuing from illiteracy he mountaineers of the Southern States is given in the *New York Herald* for ebruary 3, 1924.

At first glance, the dialect of *Sun-Up* will present apparent inconsistencies, specially in the use of the pronoun "you." On this point, Miss Vollmer rites: "The play was written, of course, for the use of the actor, and I tried o make the dialect as easy as possible for him. For instance: The mountaineer will say, 'I saw yo' dog down the road.' and in the next breath, 'Whut's yer urry?' Then he will say 'I'll tell ye 'bout that termorrow.'" Naturally the editor has printed the play as it was written by the author, who has read the original copy for this edition and has furnished certain lines in Act Three, Scene Two, which had been omitted when *Sun-Up* was first published.

Note to Fourth Edition.

In *Trigger*, produced at the Little Theatre, New York, December 6, 1927, Miss Vollmer drew the character of a wayward but spirited girl of the mountains, who elicited sympathy in her struggle against the prejudices of her narrow community. The play, however, was hardly up to her standard.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Provincetown Theatre, New York, May 24, 1923

WIDOW CAGLE.....Lucille LaVern
PAP TODD.....Owen Meech
EMMY.....Anne Elstne
BUD.....Eugene Lockhar
SHERIFF WEEKS.....Franz Bendsbe
RUFE CAGLE.....Alan Birmingha
PREACHER.....Burnside Babcoc
THE STRANGER.....Elliott Cabo
BOB.....Norman Dal

ACT I—The Interior of Widow Cagle's Cabin. Noonday. June 5, 191
ACT II—Same as Act I. Late afternoon. September.
ACT III—Same as Act I. Scene I. Midnight. February. Scene I
The same. A few hours later.

The scene of this play is in the mountains of western North Carolina, nea the city of Asheville.

THE CHARACTERS

WIDOW CAGLE—A frail, but wiry, type of woman. Past middle age. A ver positive character, but the tenderness in her nature shows in spite of he efforts to conceal it.

RUFE CAGLE—Widow Cagle's son. A young man. Good looking. A positiv character also. Gentle and kind in manner, of a build to suggest grea physical strength.

PAP TODD—An old man. Slender, but wiry. Personality, that of the "houn dog" type.

EMMY TODD—Todd's daughter. Very pretty girl. Young.

BUD TODD—Todd's son. Strong young mountaineer. Considered by his family and others, to be half-witted. However, shows intelligence when there i occasion for speech.

JIM WEEKS—Deputy-Sheriff. Typical mountaineer in manner and speech. A little better dressed than the others, he is inclined to put on airs. He feel himself better educated than the others. He tries to show this in his talk but now and then he forgets, and falls back to the mountain mode of speech.

PREACHER—Typical mountaineer.

STRANGER—A young man from Civilization.

BOB—Rough Mountaineer

SUN-UP

ACT ONE

ENE: *The interior of a typical mountain cabin. Noonday, June 5, 1917. Fireplace, with mantelpiece, at right. A door in the flat opens to out of doors. A door to left leads to the back room. In the corner between the outside door and the fireplace is a ladder reaching to an opening in the loft. Right of the outside door is a small window. It has window panes, and also an inside wooden shutter which pushes shut and open. The furniture consists of a bed in the corner between the two doors, a rough table, covered with oil cloth, in the center of the room, a bench beside the table, three small straight-back chairs, and an old cupboard. Cooking utensils are near the fireplace. A gun hangs over the door.*

RS. CAGLE *is seated before the fireplace smoking a corn-cob pipe. Her thoughts seem far away. The door opens, and* PAP TODD *enters.*

ODD. Thought I'd come and set with yer awhile, Mis' Cagle.

RS. CAGLE. (*Does not look up to greet her visitor.*) Pull ye up a chair.

ODD. (*Pulling a chair toward fireplace.*) How air yer to-day?

RS. CAGLE. Jest tolerable. (*As* TODD *seats himself and takes out pipe.*) Bring yo' own terbacker?

ODD. Yer, I brung my own. (TODD *fills his pipe and they sit for a moment without conversation.*) Shore is a fine day.

RS. CAGLE. Shore is.

ODD. (*As he lights his pipe. Takes straw from a broom near fireplace and gets light from fire.*) 'Pears like thar is goin' to be war.

RS. CAGLE. (*Without concern.*) Who's a feudin' now?

ODD. Hain't that kind er feudin'. 'Pears like hit's the country.

RS. CAGLE. Yankees agin?

ODD. Reckon so.

RS. CAGLE. Ye must be mistaken. Ain't no reason for war. Didn't the Yankees free the niggers more than fifty years ago?

TODD. Maybe they want ter make 'em slaves agin.

MRS. CAGLE. Some yarn 'nother.

TODD. Thar's somethin' up. Bud heared all about it when he wuz over to town.

MRS. CAGLE. Bud never could tell nothin' the way he heared it. 'Tain't so. Thar ain't no reason fer war, unless us poor folks fight the rich uns for the way they air bleedin' us to death with the prices for meat and bread. I tell ye, Pap Todd, we uns ought to rise up and fight the rich leeches, but we won't. Poor folks ain't got guts 'nough. That's whut makes 'em poor.

TODD. Yer got no right ter complain, Mis' Cagle. I reckon Rufe makes a good livin' fer yer. He made a good crap last year, and Bud heared over in town that yer had been offered eight hundred dollars fer yer place.

MRS. CAGLE. Bud heared right once. The sheriff wuz over to see me t'other day. 'Pears like a city man has bought the land next to ourn, and he's afeered our place will spile his view. But I ain't a sellin' out to 'blege no rich man.

TODD. Eight hundred dollars is a lot o' money.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes—till hit's spent.

TODD. Well, as I said, Rufe makes a good crap.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, Rufe makes a good crap, but if he'd raise more corn, and fear the law less, he'd be more of a man like his pap.

TODD. Moonshining?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, blockadin'. Why not?

TODD. Reckon Rufe is too young to hanker a'ter a jail term. A'ter spendin' about twenty year o' my life thar I ain't a blamin' him much.

MRS. CAGLE. Rufe's pap wuz a Cagle. I wuz an Owens. Thar's many a Cagle, and an Owens too that laid down out thar on the hills and died, but thar ain't one of 'em yit that's ever gone to jail.

TODD. Yer ain't sayin' nothin' again *me* fer goin', be yer, Mis' Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. No, ye wuz always kind o' puny. (TODD *turns away.*) And if ye ain't got nerve 'nough to stand behind a gun and shoot, I ain't got nothin' in my heart but pity for ye.

TODD. Well, the last time I wuz caught I didn't have no gun.

MRS. CAGLE. That's worse than goin' ter jail.

TODD. Ain't powerful fond er me, be yer, Mis' Cagle? In case Rufe wants ter marry my Emmy, yer wouldn't let that keep 'em apart, would yer, Mis' Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. When Rufe gits old 'nough he kin marry who he wants. Emmy's *maw wuz good stock.*

TODD. Well, maybe she wuz.

MRS. CAGLE. I thought Emmy wuz a settin' her cap for Sheriff Weeks.

TODD. Kinder thought so myself. I sorter aigged it on—not that I got anythin' agin Rufe—

MRS. CAGLE. Kinder handy for ye to have a sheriff in the family, I reckon.

TODD. Well, yes, and he's older than Rufe. But seems to me lately she's a hankerin' a'ter Rufe, and I ain't agin him.

MRS. CAGLE. Don't reckon they'd ask ye any odds if they want ter git married.

TODD. Reckon not.

MRS. CAGLE. Be mighty funny young folks if they did.

EMMY. (*Entering door without knocking. She carries a pan covered with a tin plate.* BUD *enters with her.* BUD *has a knife and stick and whittles.*) Howdy, Mis' Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. Howdy, Emmy. Pull ye up a chair.

EMMY. (*Placing pan on table.* BUD *sits down on bed and gazes into space.*) Mis' Cagle, we had a mess o' fresh meat for dinner. I brung ye and Rufe a bite.

MRS. CAGLE. Hit will taste mighty good, I reckon, Emmy. Rufe's a plum fool about fresh meat.

EMMY. Yes'um, I know he is. Pap, Bud's finished plantin' all the seed corn we got. 'Tain't more than half covered the corn patch. Think ye better send him to town a'ter more?

MRS. CAGLE. Maybe Rufe has got some extra seed.

TODD. Yer, maybe he has.

EMMY. Will he be home soon, Mis' Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. Any minute, I reckon. He wuz powerful sot on goin' ter town this mornin'. He's done wasted half a day now. He oughter be here. (*There is a knock on the door. All eyes are turne toward door.*) Bud, will ye see wh that is that cain't open the door for his self? (BUD *opens the door.* SHERIF WEEKS *enters.*)

SHERIFF. Good day, Widow Cagle. Ho you, Mr. Todd? Good mornin', Mis Emmy. How you all?

MRS. CAGLE. Howdy, Sheriff. Pull ye u a chair.

SHERIFF. No'm, ain't got time. Ruf ain't round?

MRS. CAGLE. Not right now.

SHERIFF. Well, Mis' Cagle, wonder if yo could show me just whar your piece o ground ends up this side? (*Points o to the right, through the door.*)

MRS. CAGLE. To be shore.

SHERIFF. Would you mind stepping ou here and showing me just whar you boundary line runs? Hate to troub you.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Rising and putting on f bonnet which is hanging on back of h chair.*) 'Tain't no trouble, but what worrin' 'bout my boundary line fe (*Goes out the door.*)

SHERIFF. (*Turning and smiling* EMMY.) See you again, Miss Emm (EMMY *flirts with* SHERIFF. SHERI *exits.* TODD *gets up and silently fo lows* MRS. CAGLE *and* SHERIFF *ou* BUD *follows him.*)

EMMY. Whar ye goin', Bud?

BUD. (*Turning.*) Jest goin' to see.

EMMY. Better come back here.

(BUD *goes out.* EMMY *humming song, goes to dishpan that hangs wall over cupboard. Uses it as a mi ror to primp.* RUFE *enters rather u expectedly, and catches her at h toilet.*)

RUFE. Howdy, sweetheart.

EMMY. Howdy, Mr. Cagle.

RUFE. Don't you Mister Cagle me. S it right, now.

EMMY. Howdy, Rufe.

RUFE. That's better. Whar's Mom goin

EMMY. Out yonder somew'eres with t Sheriff.

RUFE. Looked to me like the Sheriff w a takin' the whole outfit to jail.

EMMY. Oh, Rufe! Shame on ye.

RUFE. (*Laughing at his own joke.*) I glad he left ye here.

EMMY. Why?

RUFE. Save me a trip over to yo' hou

EMMY. Is comin' ter my house all th trouble?

E. No trouble, but 'pears like Pap
dd and Bud air allus a stickin' a
und.
IY. Uh huh.
E. Yes, Pap and Bud's some stickers.
est thing they kin do. Emmy—I got
methin' mighty particular to say ter ye
day.
MY. What's that, Rufe?
E. Emmy, I want ye to marry me right
f.
MY. I think that thar's somebody else
hut wants me ter do the same thing
r him. He wants me to answer him
day, too.
FE. I'll answer him fer ye. I'll beat
ell outen him. Who is he?
MY. I ain't a sayin' if ye cain't guess.
FE. Is it Zeke Sanders?
MY. 'Tain't Zeke.
FE. Or Hank Small?
MY. No.
FE. 'Tain't that old Sheriff?
MY. (*Nods in the affirmative, coquettishly.*) It's him.
FE. (*Laughing.*) Good Lord, I thought
e wuz a'ter Mom.
MY. Rufe!
FE. When did he ask ye?
MY. Yisterday.
FE. I'd shore like ter hand him one!
asked ye a year ago, didn't I, sweetheart?
MY. Uh huh.
FE. (*Holding out his arms to her.*)
Come here, and whisper yo' answer quick. (EMMY *is shy, and* RUFE *comes forward and takes her hand.*) Will you marry me right away, Emmy?
MY. Whut ye in sech a hurry fer, Rufe?
FE. Because, Emmy, I've got to go away soon. I ain't takin' no chances leavin' ye behind, unless ye belong to me—unless ye air mine. Yer love me, don't ye, Emmy?
MY. Going away? When?
FE. I'll answer yer when ye answer me. Air ye goin' to marry me?
MY. I don't know. Whar air ye goin', Rufe?
FE. I don't know.
MY. (*In a frightened voice.*) Rufe, it ain't that ye air runnin' away. Ye ain't done nothin' wrong, have ye, Rufe?
FE. Why, course not, sweetheart—(*Voices off stage.*) But—here comes Mom. Say yes, quick.

EMMY. Not now, Rufe. Wait till to-night. I'll answer ye.

RUFE. (*Eagerly.*) Then ye will come down to the pasture gate to meet me?

EMMY. Yes, jest a'ter sundown.

RUFE. And ye'll tell me then that yer will marry me?

EMMY. I ain't a promisin'.

SHERIFF. (*Off stage.*) Much obliged ter yer, Mis' Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE (*Off stage.*) Yer ain't needin' ter be. (MRS. CAGLE *enters, followed by the* SHERIFF. EMMY *moves up stage.*)

SHERIFF. Howdy, Rufe.

RUFE. Howdy, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. You going along pretty soon, Miss Emmy?

EMMY. Yes, I'm agoin' soon.

SHERIFF. Then I'll walk a piece with you.

RUFE. (*Coming up to* EMMY. *As he follows* EMMY *to far end of room.*) Reckon I'll go long, too, if ye don't mind.

SHERIFF. I ain't exactly pinin' fer yer company— (TODD *and* BUD *enter. Without comment they sit in their respective places.* MRS. CAGLE relights her *pipe.* EMMY *and* RUFE *sit on the bed by the window. A glance passes between* EMMY *and the* SHERIFF; *another glance between* EMMY *and* RUFE. RUFE *grins.*) Well, Mis' Cagle, I calculate you ain't willin' to sell yo' place even at a better price than I offered you last week.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I ain't goin' ter sell.

SHERIFF. Eight hundred dollars is a pretty good price, considering it's war times. In 'nother year it won't be worth that much.

MRS. CAGLE. Whut ye mean by war times?

SHERIFF. You don't mean to tell me that you don't know 'bout the war?

MRS. CAGLE. No, I ain't heared nothin' 'cept whut Bud said.

SHERIFF. (*Pulling a chair up and sitting down.*) Lord, yes. The whole country is at war with the Huns.

MRS. CAGLE. Huns? Who is Huns?

TODD. I fought in sixty-three.

MRS. CAGLE. Never heared of 'em.

TODD. And I got shot in the leg.

SHERIFF. Well, Huns, that's jest a nickname they call 'em. Yes, they done passed a law that every man between twenty-one and thirty-one has got to register, and to-day is the day.

MRS. CAGLE. Register? Whut ye mean?

SHERIFF. Why, sign his name, and tell the Government whar he lives.

TODD. They didn't do that in sixty-three.

MRS. CAGLE. Whut fer?

SHERIFF. So they can know whar to find 'em when they get ready for them to fight. They've got to do it to-day, too. (*Turning toward* RUFE.) Rufe, you and Bud will both have to register. (RUFE *rises.*)

MRS. CAGLE. (*As* RUFE *leaves* EMMY'S *side and comes forward.*) No, they won't. That's all tommyrot.

SHERIFF. Yes, they will. It's the law, and if they don't register the Government will deal with them. Shoot 'em down, I reckon, like deserters.

BUD. (*Frightened.*) Shoot me? Whut I got to do to keep from gittin' shot?

MRS. CAGLE. Nothin', Bud, nothin'.

SHERIFF. Yes, Bud, you got to go to town to-day, in the hall jest this side the depot, and give 'em your name, your age, and tell 'em whar you live. (BUD *looks from one face to the other.*)

MRS. CAGLE. No, ye don't, Bud. Ye stay right here, and plant yo' corn. Whut's the law got to do with you and Rufe?

RUFE. But, Mom—

MRS. CAGLE. Ye got a gun, ain't ye? That's as much as the law's got.

SHERIFF. But Mis' Cagle, the country is at war. You ferget they owe the Government something.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Springing up.*) Whut does Rufe or Bud owe the Guv'ment? The Guv'ment kept Bud's daddy in jail for twenty years 'cause he tried to make an honest livin' outen the corn he planted and raised. Whut did the Guv'ment do to Rufe's pap? Shot him dead. Shot him in the back while he wuz a protectin' his own property. Fight? Well, I reckon if either one of them boys fights, hit will be their own fight, and agin not fer the Guv'ment.

RUFE. (*Coming forward, a few steps to upper end of table.*) Mom, ye air right as far as ye go. Whut ye say is true, but Pap Todd, and my pap too, wuz a doin' whut the Government told them not to do. They wuz a breakin' the law.

MRS. CAGLE. Whut right has the Guv'ment to tell us mountain folks whut to do or whut not to do. Air we beholdin' to them? Air they doin' anything fer us but runnin' up the prices of bread and meat till hit's all we kin do to keep body and soul together!

RUFE. Well, Mom, that ain't the Govern ment's fault.

TODD. They treated me purty well whil I wuz in jail.

MRS. CAGLE. Who kin ye lay the fault to then?

RUFE. It's because we don't know much We need larnin'. We air ignorant.

SHERIFF. That's what the mountain folk need—larnin'.

MRS. CAGLE. 'Pears like the little ye bot got ain't doin' ye much good, 'cept t make plum fools outen both of y (*Sits down.*)

RUFE. (*Laughing good-naturedly.*) Ne ther one of us is got 'nough to run u crazy, Mom.

TODD. Emmy's eddicated purty wel Cain't tell much 'bout Bud. (BUD *look up.*) He won't talk. He kin writ some. (BUD *goes on whittling.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Well, if larnin' air whut w need, air the Guv'ment givin' us schools

SHERIFF. Yes'um, now and then, and reckon we would have more schools our folks would patronize them. La school we had in the village, the teach said she had to quit because the childre wouldn't come. I guess them that d come didn't larn nothin'.

MRS. CAGLE. Well, I reckon it wuz b cause the most of 'em wuz a hungry. kin fill a young un's brain all ye wa to, but hit's a goin' to run out if tha a hole in his stomach.

SHERIFF. You cain't say it's up to t Government to feed 'em all, can you, Mi Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. No, but it kin let 'em alo when they try to make money the on way they know how—blockadin'.

SHERIFF. That's why I say they ne larnin'. Larn' how to do somethin' el

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't never bin aga larnin.' I didn't have none, and Ruf pap couldn't read, but I allus want Rufe to larn as much as he could.

RUFE. Yes, ye did, Mom. Ye done all could. I kin recollect once when scho wuz a goin' on five miles down the roa I wuz too little to walk it. (*Turns the others.*) In the mornings Mom us to tote me most of the way. Then wh I started home a'ter it wuz over, Mo would leave her work in the corn fie meet me, and tote me the rest of the w home.

MRS. CAGLE. But I wouldn't a had larn nothin' if I'd a knowed it wuz

bin' to turn ye into a law lover, and ake yer fergit the laws of yo' own folks.

E. I ain't fergot, Mom. I never will, it that little bit o' larnin' taught me respect somethin' a little higher than y own way of wantin' ter to do things. m agoin' ter larn more, some day.

S. CAGLE. I want ye to larn books, hen, not foolishness.

FE. Well, Mom, ain't whut I knowed ade me the best farmer on the mountains? Don't I make ye a good livin'?

S. CAGLE. I ain't a complainin'. I on't keer how much larnin' ye git if ye on't turn skeered puppy, and lick the oots of them law mongers, like Jim Weeks.

ERIFF. Now, Mis' Cagle.

FE. I ain't, Mom, but ye would want he to do whut I thought wuz right, even f it wuz to go to war, wouldn't ye?

S. CAGLE. In this Guv'ment feud?—No— If ye want to fight, son, git Zeb Turner, the man who killed yo' pap.

(*A commotion is heard outside.* BUD *jumps up excitedly, and looks out of the door.*)

D. Rufe, Rufe, the cow's out with the calf—the cow's out with the calf. Hit's suckin' all the milk—

(*The* SHERIFF *rises.*)

FFE. (*Rushing to the door, and out.*) Who left them bars down?

RS. CAGLE. Pap Todd, you wuz the last one that come through them bars—

(*Goes out as she puts on her fly bonnet.*)

DD. (*Rising.*) Never teched them bars. I jumped the fence. (*Follows to the door and goes out.* BUD *follows him.*)

UD. Why, Pap? (*Goes out.*)

HERIFF. Now ain't I lucky?

MMY. (*Coming down a step near fireplace.*) How come?

HERIFF. Got a chance to talk to you.

MMY. Whut ye got to talk about?

HERIFF. Our gittin' married.

MMY. (*Turning away.*) I think there's somebody else wants me to do the same thing to him.

HERIFF. Who?

MMY. If ye don't know, I ain't a sayin'.

HERIFF. (*Putting his hands in his pockets.*) Well, that ain't hard fer me to guess, but I calculate, Miss Emmy, that you air a woman of sense, and want to do the best thing fer yourself in this here gittin' married. Don't you?

MMY. (*Turning away.*) I ain't a sayin'.

HERIFF. (*Taking a step towards her.*) Well, the difference between me and Rufe —Rufe's a good (*gestures with right hand*) boy—but the difference is this. Rufe ain't got nothin' but a farm. I got a little farm, and an office besides. Rufe ain't never made nothin' of hisself, and I'm kinder looked up to, and respected.

EMMY. Yes—

SHERIFF. I calculate I could be worse lookin', couldn't I?

(*Pause.* EMMY *looks him over.*)

EMMY. Yes, a little.

SHERIFF. I've told you that I love yer, and I figure there's a little love in your heart for somebody, ain't there?

EMMY. I reckon so.

SHERIFF. Well, is it fer me?

EMMY. I ain't sayin' jest yit.

SHERIFF. Well, seein' us together, I'm willing to take my chances with Rufe. I'll let you choose between me and him. But I'll say this much in my favor. As conditions air, Rufe has got to go to war. I ain't. You stand more chances of being Widow Cagle than you do of bein' Widow Weeks.

EMMY. (*Rising. With great interest.*) Is that whar Rufe's goin'? To war?

SHERIFF. Yes, he will have to go and fight.

EMMY. How come you don't have to go?

SHERIFF. Well, I'm an officer of the law, and besides, I'm a little over the age limit.

EMMY. Ye too old to go?

SHERIFF. No, not too old. I could go, but it ain't compulsory.

EMMY. Rufe don't have to go neither.

SHERIFF. Yes, he will have to go.

EMMY. When?

SHERIFF. Pretty soon. Now you think it over, Miss Emmy, and you'll say it's better all the way 'round to be Mis' Weeks, wife of Sheriff Weeks—

EMMY. Hit would be wife of Deputy-Sheriff Weeks, wouldn't it?

SHERIFF. Yes, but everybody calls me Sheriff, and in time—

(RUFE *and* MRS. CAGLE *enter, quickly followed by* PAP TODD *and* BUD. TODD *is excited.*)

TODD. I tell yer, I jumped the fence.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Going to her chair.*) When? Twenty years ago? (*Takes tobacco from her pocket and begins to fill her pipe.*)

TODD. I didn't leave no bars down. All the time yarmin' about me.

MRS. CAGLE. Set down, Pap.

EMMY. (*Coming forward to meet* RUFE.) Rufe, I cain't come to the pasture gate to-night.

RUFE. (*His countenance falling.*) How come ye cain't, Emmy?

(SHERIFF *grins, and evidences great expectancy.*)

EMMY. I want to give ye my answer now, Rufe.

SHERIFF. That's right, Emmy.

EMMY. (*Coming close to* RUFE.) Air ye willin', Rufe?

RUFE. As ye say, Emmy.

EMMY. Then, Rufe, I'll marry ye.

RUFE. (*Clasping her in his arms.*) I knowed ye would, Emmy.

SHERIFF. Why, Miss Emmy! (*Sits down meekly.*)

TODD. Air ye proposin' to Rufe, Emmy?

MRS. CAGLE. (*To* TODD.) Set down, Pap Todd. (*To* RUFE.) Well, son, if ye air a goin' ter marry Emmy, I reckon ye'll git over the notion of registerin' to fight in this here Guv'ment feud of Jim Weeks'!

RUFE. No, Mom, 'case I done registered this mornin'.

ACT TWO

SCENE: *Same as Act One.*

MRS. CAGLE *is sweeping the floor with a brush broom.* RUFE *enters and puts the hoe inside the door.*

RUFE. (*Wiping the perspiration from his brow.*) Well, Mom, the corn's all hoed. It won't need no more workin'.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking up.*) All right, Rufe. How 'bout the tater patch? Put that hoe outside, son—

RUFE. (*Putting the hoe outside the door and going to the basin to wash his hands.*) That's done, too. (*He washes his hands in the basin.*) 'Tain't nothin' more to be done 'cept gatherin' the crap. Ye don't have to worry 'bout that. I've done fixed it up with Bud. He's goin' ter do it all.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Sweeping hearth.*) How much did ye agree to pay him?

RUFE. I done paid him.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Stops sweeping.*) How?

RUFE. (*Going over and drying his hands on her apron.*) With the money I've bin savin' fer my schoolin'.

MRS. CAGLE. I didn't want ye to spe that, son.

RUFE. Well, I heared the Government w a goin' ter pay us wages.

MRS. CAGLE. 'Tain't so.

RUFE. Maybe it is, Mom. If it is, I k save that all the time I'm gone, 'cose th say we won't need no money in France

MRS. CAGLE. Whar *is* France?

RUFE. I don't know. I heared it w 'bout forty miles 't 'other side o' Ash ville.

MRS. CAGLE. Goin' a mighty long ways fight, seems ter me.

RUFE. Maybe it ain't so far. Think wuz old man Todd that told me.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon he thinks he's be thar.

RUFE. (*Sitting down.*) I reckon.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Laying the broom down, gets a pan of green beans from the cu board, then sits on her chair and gins to string beans.*) Shore is a d spell.

RUFE. Yes, 'tis. I hope it will stay though, till I git to France. I allus h to tramp in the mud. 'Spect them ro over thar air pretty bad.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, I reckon.

RUFE. Mom, I've already fed the cow a the hogs. Sorter early, but I didn't w ter leave it for ye. Bud said he'd m fer ye to-night.

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't afeered o' work.

RUFE. I know ye ain't, but it's my pl to do it. I've done it ever since Pap w kilt.

MRS. CAGLE. Yo' pap wuz a fine m Rufe.

RUFE. I know he wuz. That makes think o' somethin' I wanted to say ye, Mom. Sometimes I've felt that thought I wuzn't like my pap—that wuz one of them skeered kind 'cose wouldn't make whisky.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I never thought ye w askeered, but I thought ye wuz kind foolish not to make money the easy w Heap easier ter make moonshine than is to make a crap.

RUFE. Well, Mom, it's like this. I a afeered o' nothin'. Ye ought ter kn that, but I don't believe in whisky. bad stuff. I don't drink it myself, an don't want to sell it to nobody. Look old man Todd. He made it, and drunk it too. Bud told me jest t'ot day that he knowed he would have m sense if the ole man hadn't bin seech

unkard. Jest look whut corn juice has ade outen that ole man.

. CAGLE. Well, if whisky hadn't done killin', or somethin' else would have. e wuz jest naturally born without any ckbone.

E. No, I reckon he ain't got much. Ye n't a mindin' me marryin' Emmy, air e, Mom?

S. CAGLE. No, Emmy cain't help who er pap wuz. She's a good gal, and so uz her maw.

E. I've done ask Emmy to live here ith ye, Mom, so's ye won't be all by o'self.

S. CAGLE. Well, the gal will be comany, and she's welcome, but I calculate e'll have the old man and Bud most of he time.

FE. No, I done told Bud to eat at home, nd let his pap do the cookin'. I told im plain I wuz a payin' him fer his work without eats. Bud ain't no fool, if he is a little queer.

S. CAGLE. No, he ain't no fool.

(*Pause.*)

FE. Seems kind o' strange to think o' me gittin' married.

S. CAGLE. Ye do seem kinder young, Rufe. Don't seem more than yisterday that ye wuz a playin' 'round with mud pies. Times and children do change.

UFE. Well, Mom, I want ye to know that if I married a hundred women—somehow —you'd always sorter be first in my mind.

RS. CAGLE. Hit's only natural. I reckon if ye air old enough to fight, ye air old enough to git married. 'Pears to me like a man jest gittin' married ought ter stay at home with his wife.

UFE. Mom, I hate to go off and leave ye feelin' like that 'bout my goin'. I wish ye could see it like I do. If ye cain't now, maybe ye will some day.

RS. CAGLE. Yo' pap wuz a brave man.

UFE. Mom, it's because I'm Pap's son that I want to go. He died fer whut he thought wuz right. Why, Mom, way back fifty years ago even ole Pap Todd had a chance to fight the Yankees. Now, Mom, it's fer ye, and the ole wimen like ye, that I want to go. They say they air goin' to make us slaves this time. We air almost slaves now, bein' so poor, but it could be worse, Mom. Ye know I kin shoot like hell. Nobody kin handle an old gun any better than I kin. Ain't ye willin' to trust me, Mom? Ain't ye willin' fer me to go?

MRS. CAGLE. Ye air yo' own man, son. I ain't one to hold ye back if ye air sot on goin'. But don't ye let 'em make ye go, or scare ye into goin'.

RUFE. I'm a goin' of my own free will.

MRS. CAGLE. Then it 'tain't fer me to say no more.

RUFE. I'll come back as soon as I kin.

MRS. CAGLE. It jest seems a little queer to me that ye air goin' off to fight the Yankees with Zeb Turner, the man who killed yo' pap, still alive.

RUFE. Mom, ye ain't a forgettin' that I tracked Zeb Turner fer nearly a year, air ye? And I found him, Mom, without a gun. When I went to shoot, he lifted his arms and cried "O God," and, Mom, it jest warn't in me to kill a man with the name of his maker on his lips.

MRS. CAGLE. The feud would a said—go with him till he got a gun.

RUFE. Maybe I ought—but when I wuz little, down to the mission school they larned me somethin' different outen the Bible—

MRS. CAGLE. (*After a thoughtful pause.*) Larnin' air a strange thing, son. But if yo' pap wuz alive, ye wouldn't be goin' off to war.

RUFE. Maybe not, Mom—maybe not.

MRS. CAGLE. Got all yo' things together?

RUFE. Yes, and my ole rifle is all cleaned up.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon ye better take that old quilt offen yo' bed. Kinder help out if ye don't have no bed to lie on.

RUFE. It's sech hot weather don't reckon I'll need it.

MRS. CAGLE. Hot weather cain't last always.

RUFE. (*Rising and looking up at the sun.*) 'Bout time fer Emmy to be comin'.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, think I hear 'em comin'.

BUD. (*Appearing at the door, carrying a heavy basket.*) Howdy, Mis' Cagle. Howdy, Rufe.

MRS. CAGLE. Howdy, Bud.

RUFE. Howdy, Bud.

BUD. I brung Emmy's things.

MRS. CAGLE. Put 'em in the back room, Bud.

BUD. (*Starting across the room, but at the door stops and turns.*) Preacher's comin' with Pap and Emmy. (*Putting down basket, he puts his hand in his pocket and draws out a pistol. To* RUFE.) Rufe, I brung ye this. If yer gun kicked up yer'd have somethin' else.

RUFE. (*Rising.*) Bud, ye keep that. Ye

might need it to take keer o' Mom and Emmy.

BUD. Yer don't want it?

RUFE. I'm jest as much obleeged, but I want ye to look out fer my wimen folks. Ye keep it.

BUD. (*Putting pistol back in pocket.*) All right.

(BUD *goes to the other room with the basket.* PAP TODD *enters, followed by the* PREACHER *and* EMMY.)

MRS. CAGLE. Howdy, Pap. Howdy, Preacher.

TODD. Yer see, I brung him.

PREACHER. (*Going forward and shaking hands with* MRS. CAGLE, *who does not rise.*) Howdy, Widow Cagle. (*Turning to* RUFE.) Howdy, Rufe.

RUFE. (*Stepping forward and shaking hands with the* PREACHER.) Howdy, sir.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Putting beans in the pot on the fire. She wipes her hands on her apron, and takes pipe and tobacco from her pocket.*) Pull ye up chairs and set down—

(BUD *enters.*)

PREACHER. (*Sitting down.*) Powerful dry spell we air havin'.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Sitting down.*) Powerful.

TODD. Hit wuz a powerful dry spell like this when me and Emmy's maw wuz married.

MRS. CAGLE. Warn't dry much a'ter, wuz it, Pap? (*As she fills her own pipe.* PAP *puts the basin on the floor.*) Bring yo' own terbacker, Preacher?

PREACHER. (*Feeling in his pockets.*) Well, no, reckon I didn't. I come off in sech a hurry.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Breaking off a pipe full and handing it to him.*) Here's a pipe full.

PREACHER. I ain't got my pipe, so I reckon I'll jest chaw it. (*Puts the tobacco in his mouth.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Ye brung yourn, didn't ye, Pap?

TODD. Yer, I brung my own.

MRS. CAGLE. How's meetin's goin' on in the new church, Preacher?

PREACHER. Pretty fair. Had 'bout twelve brethren out last Sabbath.

MRS. CAGLE. Anybody bin shot in the church yit?

PREACHER. No'm, not yit.

MRS. CAGLE. Well, 'tain't hardly old 'nough yit.

PREACHER. They tell me Rufe's goin' to war, Widow Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, he's goin'.

PREACHER. Powerful sinful thing. Powerful wicked.

MRS. CAGLE. Most things is to preachers.

TODD. Powerful hurtin' thing when yer gi hit in the leg like I did.

PREACHER. I hate mighty bad to see Ruf go off and git shot.

MRS. CAGLE. Rufe kin shoot.

(*Slight pause.*)

RUFE. I reckon.

PREACHER. Well, Rufe, I reckon ye wan ter git this thing over as soon as possibl

RUFE. Yes, sir. I got to go by sundown Crowd of us is goin' to meet some soldier that's camped down here 'bout half mile.

PREACHER. All right. You and the brid come and stand here. (PREACHER *rises.* RUFE *and* EMMY *follow his direction* MRS. CAGLE *and* TODD *calmly smoke on* BUD *stands aside and watches every mov with great interest.*) I reckon ye bot air willin'.

RUFE. I reckon.

PREACHER. You, Miss Emmy?

EMMY. I reckon.

(SHERIFF *appears at door.*)

PREACHER. Reckon none of the rest o you's got any objections?

(MRS. CAGLE *shakes her head, "no," an goes on with her smoking.*)

TODD. Reckon me and Bud ain't go nothin' agin it.

SHERIFF. I got a lot agin it but I recko it's no use.

MRS. CAGLE. Too late, Jim Weeks.

PREACHER. Howdy, Jim.

SHERIFF. Go on, Preacher. I'm agin i but I gotter hold my peace.

PREACHER. Now join hands. (*They do s awkwardly.*) Rufe Cagle, before Go and the law, do you take this woma Emmy Todd, to be your wedded wife?

RUFE. Yes, sir.

PREACHER. Emmy Todd, do you take thi man, Rufe Cagle, before God and the law to be your wedded husband?

EMMY. Yes, sir.

PREACHER. Do you both promise to love and help each other until death part you?

RUFE. Yes, sir.

EMMY. Yes, sir.

PREACHER. Then, in the name of God an the law I now call you man and wif

TODD. Amen.

MRS. CAGLE. Sorry, Preacher that ye cain' marry two folks without pullin' in th law.

ERIFF. Law's law, Mis' Cagle.

(PREACHER *shakes hands with* RUFE *and then* EMMY. *Then* RUFE *and* EMMY *awkwardly shake hands.*)

FE. (*Taking plug of tobacco from his ip pocket and handing it to the* PREACHER.) I'm much obleeged to ye, sir.

EACHER. (*Taking the tobacco eagerly.*) Ye air welcome.

(EMMY *and* RUFE *sit and talk quietly together.* BUD *stands watching them.*)

DD. In my day we allus had a little celebratin' when young uns got hitched.

RS. CAGLE. I wuz calculatin' ter feed ye fer supper tonight.

REACHER. (*Sitting down.*) Now that's kind of you, Mis' Cagle. I sho' will enjoy a bite 'fore I start across the mountain.

DD. 'Fore supper, Preacher, come over to my house, and I'll give yer a little spirits to take home with yer in case o' sickness.

REACHER. I do have a tech o' sickness now and then.

RS. CAGLE. Remember, I ain't a havin' no supper fer drunkards, now.

REACHER. Oh, I never tech it, Mis' Cagle, 'cept in case of sickness.

DD. Law, Mis' Cagle, I ain't got 'nough in my house to make the Preacher drunk.

(*Rising. Just then a large bottle falls to the floor from under his coat. He goes after it.*) Now, don't that beat hell!

(*Every one, including* MRS. CAGLE *laughs loudly. In the midst of the laughter there comes from the distance strains of "The Star Spangled Banner." Instantly the laughter ceases. All eyes are turned toward the music, and all listen intently. Slowly* MRS. CAGLE *rises to her feet; awkwardly* RUFE *rises. This is done without any knowledge, or intent, of patriotism. The music strikes to their stoic souls, and they know not why. The sun goes down.*)

EMMY. (*On the verge of tears, is the first to speak.*) Ain't that purty?

MRS. CAGLE. Hit's church music, ain't it, Preacher?

PREACHER. (*Sitting again.*) Yes'm, I reckon so. Reckon it's one of them new hymns I don't know.

TODD. Hit's sure a sign—

RUFE. (*Breaking in.*) Of good luck.

BUD. I wisht they'd do it again.

PREACHER. 'Pears like somebody's furnished us music fer the weddin'.

TODD. I might a brought my old fiddle over. I kin bring it, and play a little a'ter supper, cain't I, Mis' Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, if ye be sober.

PREACHER. I'll see to that, Widow Cagle. (*Rising.*) I reckon if we git back in time fer supper, we'd better start a'ter that fiddle now, Brother Todd.

TODD. Yes, Mis' Cagle is mighty spry cook, if she do be gettin' along.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Going to the fireplace and stirring the kettle.*) Spryer than ye wuz at my age ten years ago, Pap Todd. Leavin' that licker behind, Pap?

TODD. No'm. Mebbe Preacher'll hev a tech o' sickness on the way over. Come 'long, Preacher.

PREACHER. You air stayin' fer supper, ain't yer, Rufe?

RUFE. (*Coming forward and shaking hands with the* PREACHER.) No sir, I'm goin' in a few minutes now.

PREACHER. Then I'll say good-by to ye. Good luck. I'll pray fer yer.

RUFE. I'd be much obleeged ter ye if yer would. Good-by, sir.

SHERIFF. (*Going towards door.*) Good-by, Rufe.

RUFE. Good-by, Sheriff.

MRS. CAGLE. Ain't ye stayin' fer supper, Sheriff?

SHERIFF. No'm. Ain't hungry. (*Goes out.*)

TODD. (*Shaking hands with* RUFE.) Good-by, Rufe. I hope yer don't git hit in the leg like me.

RUFE. Good-by, Pap Todd.

TODD. When yer fire, Rufe, always shoot sideways, like this— (*Demonstrates.*) Then the Yank that's a shootin' at yer has got ter hit yer the narrow way.

RUFE. I bin shootin' a long time, Pap.

TODD. Yes, but yer ain't never bin shot at by a Yankee. I hope yer don't come home all shot ter pieces like I wuz, Rufe.

RUFE. I reckon I won't. Good-by, Pap.

TODD. Good-by, Rufe.

TODD. (*Turning to* MRS. CAGLE.) Me and the Preacher will be right back, Mis' Cagle. (*Goes out with* PREACHER.)

MRS. CAGLE. See yer do. (*Knocking the ashes out of her pipe, and putting pipe in her pocket.*) I'll get yo' things ready fer ye, Rufe. Better stay and have somethin' hot to eat, son.

RUFE. Wish I could, but I cain't, Mom.

(MRS. CAGLE *goes into the other room.*)

BUD. (*Coming up to* RUFE.) I got to follow Pap, Rufe. (*Holds out hand to* RUFE.) I wisht I wuz a goin' with yer.

RUFE. (*Shaking his hand.*) I want ye to take good care of Emmy and Mom, Bud. Ye'll allus do that, won't yer?

BUD. I done told yer so.

RUFE. I ain't afeered to leave 'em with ye.

BUD. If the Yankees git too many fer yer, let me know and I'll come and help yer out. Don't git hurt, Rufe.

RUFE. Ye ain't no fool, Bud. They may draft ye, too. If they do, ye leave somebody to look a'ter the wimen folks.

BUD. All right. I won't fergit nothin' yer told me. I got ter hurry and ketch Pap, and take his liquor 'way from him. Good-by.

RUFE. Good-by. (BUD *hurries off, wiping his eyes. Turning to* EMMY.) Come here, little un, and give me a kiss while we air by ourselves.

EMMY. (*Quickly throwing her arms about him. He holds her in a close embrace.*) O, Rufe, cain't yer stay? Why do ye have to go? Why do ye have to leave me?

RUFE. Don't, little woman, ye most break my heart. I don't want ter leave ye.

EMMY. Then why do ye go?

RUFE. I have to go, Emmy. That is, I'd be ashamed not to go.

EMMY. Cain't ye wait a week, Rufe? Maybe the war will be over then.

RUFE. No, Emmy, I cain't. Don't tell Mom, but I'm whut they call drafted. They have called my name, and I've got to be thar tomorrow, sometime.

EMMY. In France?

RUFE. I reckon.

EMMY. (*Passionately.*) Then they air a forcin' ye to go.

RUFE. (*Shaking his head.*) No, I don't have to go. I could stay and hide right here on my place, and they never would find me, but I'd be ashamed to face ye and Mom if I stayed, Emmy.

EMMY. But why, Rufe?

RUFE. I cain't explain it. I don't exactly know. I ain't got no education, yet, and I couldn't understand all the soldiers I talked to told me. But hit's somethin' like this, honey. This here country is ourn, 'cose God let us be born here. (MRS. CAGLE *stands in doorway.* RUFE *and* EMMY *do not see her.*) It's fed us, and kinder brung us up. We love it, don't we, Emmy?

EMMY. Yes, Rufe, but—

RUFE. Yes we do. I do, Emmy. I lov every rock, and every tree, and ever hill 'round here. (*Points.*) Out tha on that hill my pap died fer whut h thought wuz right. He's at rest dow thar in the valley near to your mav Some day Mom will lie thar, and you and maybe—me. Hit's ours, Emmy We don't own all the land, but hit's our jest the same, to love and enjoy 'cos God A'mighty give it to us. There's lot o' folks, Emmy, that's got a hon somew'eres else that wants ourn too. got to go help defend my hills, and m home, and my wimen folks, ain't honey?

(MRS. CAGLE *goes into other room.*)

EMMY. I didn't know all that. Ye Rufe, ye air a man, and ye got to figh fer what's right. Ye go, and I'll b awaitin' fer ye, and a lovin' ye. An if ye don't come back—

RUFE. I reckon I will, honey.

EMMY. I reckon ye will, but if ye don' I'll know ye died like yo' Pap. I'll b proud of ye. Jest seems like I cain stand it, but I kin, 'cause other wome have stood it, and I reckon ye ain't r more to me than other women's husband air to them.

RUFE. That's whut I bin a thinkin Emmy. Other men whut's goin' hav got as much to leave at home as me. I' write ye, and ye'll take good care Mom, and yo'self, won't ye, Emmy?

EMMY. Ye know I will, Rufe.

RUFE. Hit's gittin' late. I got to go.

EMMY. Rufe, kin I walk a little way with ye? So I won't have to say good by to ye here. I want to stay with y as long as I kin, Rufe.

RUFE. Of course, sweetheart. Ye kin g as far as the pasture gate. Here come Mom. Ye talk to her while I git m *things.* (MRS. CAGLE *enters, sits dow in her chair and begins to smoke he pipe.*) Did ye put my snack with m things, Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, Rufe. Beside yo' gu (RUFE *goes to other room.*) Gettin dark quick, ain't it?

EMMY. Yes'um.

MRS. CAGLE. Reckon this dry spell wi let up by tomorrow. Looks like mought rain.

EMMY. Yes'um.

(*There is a pause.* RUFE *enters, pac over his arm and gun in his hand.*)

FE. Bud will be over and milk for ye, Mom.

S. CAGLE. All right, son.

FE. (*After a painful pause.*) Well, reckon I'll have to be goin'.

S. CAGLE. (*Smoking calmly on.*) Take keer o' yo'self.

FE. Ye do the same, Mom.

S. CAGLE. Ye kin write, Emmy kin read the letters.

FE. I'll write. (*There is another pause.*) Well—good-by, Mom.

RS. CAGLE. Good-by, son.

MMY. Ain't ye goin' to kiss him, Mom?

RS. CAGLE. (*Without emotion.*) Whut's the use o' sech foolishness.

FE. All right. Just as ye say, Mom. God bless ye. (*Tears himself away.*)

RS. CAGLE. If ye fight, son, shoot to *kill.*

FE. (*Going off, followed by* EMMY.) I will, Mom. Good-by.

RS. CAGLE. Take keer o' yo'self.

(RUFE *and* EMMY *go out. For a moment or two* MRS. CAGLE *calmly smokes on. Then she rises and follows to where she can watch* RUFE *as he goes down the path. The shadows deepen. She appears to strain her eyes as if to catch a last look at him. Then she goes slowly back to the doorway. The hoe* RUFE *left leaning against the house attracts her attention. She lifts the hoe up tenderly, as if it were a living thing, and moves her hand over the handle as if to caress it. The darkness comes. The pipe drops from her mouth.*)

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *The interior of* WIDOW CAGLE'S *cabin, at night. A fire burns on the hearth. A lighted lantern is on table.* RUFE'S *hoe leans against the wall near the door. Outside a blizzard is raging. Now and then with the increasing violence of the storm, the door of the cabin shakes. There is a weird howling, or whistling of the wind.*

MRS. CAGLE *sits by the fire smoking. Now and then she looks up, and listens to the storm. A yellow envelope is in her hand. She rises and goes to the table. Holding the envelope near the lantern she looks it over with great interest. She then goes to window and opening the wooden shutter peers out into the darkness. She hangs the lantern on a nail by the pane of glass and leaves the wooden shutter open. Still holding the envelope she returns to her chair by the fireplace, and goes on with her smoking. A man's voice is heard above the raging of the storm.*

VOICE. Hallo—Hallo— (MRS. CAGLE *rises and listens. She goes to the window and looks out.*) Hallo—Hallo—Hallo there!

MRS. CAGLE. (*Unbarring door. Calling.*) That ye, Bud?

VOICE. Let me in. Please let me in. I'm almost frozen.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Opening the door wide.*) Who be ye? Whut ye want?

VOICE. Let me in, for God's sake. (*A man stumbles in the door. He is bareheaded, and without an overcoat. His coat and trousers are much too large for him. His shoes are tan, and well fitted.*) Please let me warm, and give me food. (*Hurries to fire and shakes the snow from his clothes.*)

MRS. CAGLE. (*As she closes the door.*) Did Emmy send ye? Did ye come from Pap Todd's?

STRANGER. No, I came from— I lost my way in the snow.

MRS. CAGLE. Well, set down, stranger, and warm yo'self. I got Emmy's supper a warmin' by the fire. Ye kin have part of that.

STRANGER. Let me warm first. I'm dying with cold.

MRS. CAGLE. Did ye come far?

STRANGER. Yes, a long way.

MRS. CAGLE. Maybe ye come from France?

STRANGER. (*With some uneasiness.*) No, no.

MRS. CAGLE. Didn't ye have no hat or overcoat?

STRANGER. I lost them in the storm. It is terrible out.

MRS. CAGLE. The worst in many a year. (*She places the food that is warming by the fire on the table and takes the lantern from the nail by the window and places it on the table.*)

STRANGER. Does that wooden shutter close?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, hit s' uts.

STRANGER. Would you mind if I close it? It would make the room seem warmer.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Going to window and clos-*

ing the shutter.) No, I ain't got no reason for keepin' it open. Jest thought Emmy might like to see the light when she started home, but I reckon Bud will come with her part o' the way, anyhow.

STRANGER. Who is Bud—who is Emmy?

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking closely at him as she answers the question that seems to her impertinent.*) Emmy's my daughter-in-law, and Bud's her brother. Bud's a little queer in the head—

STRANGER. I see. How far is this place from Asheville?

MRS. CAGLE. I don't know. I've heared tell of Asheville, but I ain't never bin thar.

STRANGER. What is the name of that little settlement about three miles down the road?

MRS. CAGLE. I allus heared it called town. That's all I know. Whar mought your home be, stranger?

STRANGER. Why—in Virginia.

MRS. CAGLE. I never heard tell o' that place. Be it far from here?

STRANGER. Yes—a few miles.

MRS. CAGLE. Air ye figurin' on gittin' thar tonight?

STRANGER. No, not tonight. The roads are almost beyond travelling.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye kin move yo' chair up, and eat now.

STRANGER. Thank you. (*Moves his chair up to table and eats ravenously.*) Could you keep me for the night? I have a little money. I can pay you.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I don't keep no boarders, but I reckon ye air welcome to seeh as I got. (*Looking at him very carefully.*) I reckon that ye air honest?

STRANGER. Well, yes. I try to be.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Getting coffee.*) Then ye kin stay in Rufe's room, and Emmy can sleep with me.

STRANGER. I see you have a hoe in the house. I've always heard that was bad luck.

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't afeered o' bad luck. Hit's Rufe's—my son's hoe, and he's gone off.

STRANGER. Oh, I see.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Eagerly.*) Kin ye read, stranger?

STRANGER. (*Amused.*) A little.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Showing him the yellow envelope.*) Then maybe ye kin read this letter. Hit's from my son.

STRANGER. (*Reaching out to take it.*) I'll try.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Opening the envelope.*) kin open it.

STRANGER. (*Looking at the single page o contents. Falters as he hands it back to her and answers.*) No, I'm sorry— can't read that.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Sitting on bench. Sh shows disappointment as she encloses th page in the envelope.*) Well, no matter Emmy, his wife, will be here soon. He pap is sick and she's gone to see him.

STRANGER. How long has your son been gone?

MRS. CAGLE. Since last September. Hit' kinder lonesome since he left. I'm glad ye come.

STRANGER. Thank you. Was your son drafted?

MRS. CAGLE. He registered—that whut y mean?

STRANGER. Well, yes, and then afterward they called him—made him go.

MRS. CAGLE. No, he went of his own free will.

STRANGER. (*With something like bitterness.*) I suppose you're very proud o him?

MRS. CAGLE. He's a good boy, Rufe is.

STRANGER. Yes, of course, but I suppos you're very proud of him because h joined the army of his own free will.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I think he'd a showed more sense if he had a stayed home and gathered his crap.

STRANGER. Then you are opposed to his going? (MRS. CAGLE *looks at him inquiringly.*) I mean you weren't willing for him to go?

MRS. CAGLE. Well, he wuz sot on goin Seemed to think he oughter. I didn' say nothin' to keep him from doin' whu he thought was right. In spite of whu the Guv'ment done to his pap, Ruf figured he outer help 'em out agin' th Yankees.

STRANGER. (*With surprise.*) The Yan kees—?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes. Who he's a fightin'.

STRANGER. (*Laughing good-naturedly.* Oh, I see.

MRS. CAGLE. Did ye register?

STRANGER. Yes.

MRS. CAGLE. Air ye figurin' on goin'?

STRANGER. There's no way out of it.

MRS. CAGLE. If ye air a man thar is. I ye stay at home they cain't do no mor than shoot ye. That's whut they'll d to ye out thar. I'd ruther die at hom than somew'eres out thar in the mud.

RANGER. You mustn't talk that way. If you were heard saying that, they might —shoot you.

RS. CAGLE. Let 'em shoot. The law killed my man. Hit's got my boy out thar somew'eres. Shootin' me wouldn't matter. (*There is a slight pause.*) Have ye got a maw livin'?

TRANGER. Yes, and she's getting old too. I'm her only son. I'm on my way to see her now—if nothing happens—

(*There is a lull in the storm, and voices are heard outside. The* STRANGER *looks up frightened.*)

HERIFF. (*Calling outside.*) Hallo, Widow Cagle. You gone to bed? (*The* STRANGER *springs up with terror in his face.*)

IRS. CAGLE. That sounds like the Sheriff's voice.

TRANGER. (*In a frightened whisper.*) Don't let them in. They're after me. I've got to get—home.

IRS. CAGLE. (*Rising and looking at him closely.*) Whut ye done?

TRANGER. Nothing that's really wrong. I swear it. (*There is a knocking at the door.*)

IRS. CAGLE. Ye air goin' home to see yo' maw?

TRANGER. Yes.

IRS. CAGLE. Then they cain't get ye. Go in the back room. Git in bed and cover up yo' head.

TRANGER. They'll find me in there.

IRS. CAGLE. Hurry. They won't git ye. (STRANGER *hurries into the back room. Heavy knocking is heard.* MRS. CAGLE *takes the gun from the corner and goes to the door.*) Who be ye? That ye, Bud?

HERIFF. It's me, Widow Cagle, Sheriff Weeks.

IRS. CAGLE. (*Opening the door.*) Whut ye want, Sheriff? Lost in the storm?

(SHERIFF *and a man enter.*)

HERIFF. Hate to trouble you, Mis' Cagle, but me and this here man air looking for a deserter from one of the Army camps.

IRS. CAGLE. I reckon ye kinder froze up, and want to git warm. Well, if it wuzn't sech a cold night I'd make ye go on. Pull ye up chairs, and thaw out.

HERIFF. (*Looking around as he goes to the fire. His man follows and stands with his back to the fire.*) The fact is, Mis' Cagle, we've tracked the man to this here cabin.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon he wuz a puttin' fer the woods back yonder.

SHERIFF. There is fresh foot prints in the snow right up to your door, Mis' Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. Them must be Bud's big feet tracks. He wuz here. I reckon he's home by now.

SHERIFF. There ain't no foot prints leavin', Mrs. Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon not 'cose Bud went out the back door.

SHERIFF. I reckon you don't mind me searchin' the house, Mis' Cagle. It's law, you know.

MRS. CAGLE. If ye had a little more common sense, and less law, I'd respect ye more, Sheriff. 'Tain't nobody in the house but me and Emmy. Emmy is in bed asleep. Ye kin search all ye want to so's ye don't wake Emmy. She's bin a settin' up with old Pap Todd. He's bin mighty low.

SHERIFF. Yes, I heared he wuz sick. Well, if you don't mind, Widow Cagle, we'll jest look in under her bed.

MRS. CAGLE. Go ahead. (*Both men enter the back room. She follows to the door with gun in her hand.*) Don't ye put yo' hands on that bed. Come outen thar before ye wake the gal up.

(*The men come out but the* SHERIFF *casts an eye back to the door.*)

SHERIFF. Well, I reckon there ain't nobody in there. Have to look in the loft, too, Mis' Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. All right. Go ahead. Maybe the next time ye come snoopin' 'round ye'll take my word.

SHERIFF (*to his assistant.*) Bob, you go up in the loft by yourself. I want to git my feet warm 'fore we start out. (*Goes to the fire.* BOB *goes up the ladder to the loft.*) Mighty sorry, Mis' Cagle. It ain't that I dispute your word. We air simply carryin' out the law. This here feller deserted camp. One of the officers caught sight of him in town a little while ago, but he lost him so he set me out lookin' for him.

MRS. CAGLE. I hope he gits away.

SHERIFF. Pretty dangerous talk, Mis' Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't afeerd of none o' ye.

SHERIFF. Well, I know you don't mean no harm.

MRS. CAGLE. Mean whut I say. Put on some more logs, Sheriff. I hate fer ye to be cold if ye do belong to the law.

SHERIFF. (*Laughs as he kneels down on*

hearth to replenish the fire. Looking up.) Heared from Rufe lately?

MRS. CAGLE. Today.

SHERIFF. How's he gittin' along?

MRS. CAGLE. Pretty well. (*The* SHERIFF *turns his attention again to the fire. The door opens and* EMMY *enters.* MRS. CAGLE *is somewhat confused, but she holds her own. The* SHERIFF *springs to his feet.*) Well, I declare—

SHERIFF. Well, I'll be doggone! Howdy, Miss Emmy.

EMMY. Howdy, Sheriff. Mis' Cagle, Bud said—

MRS. CAGLE. I don't keer whut Bud said. Whut ye mean by foolin' me like that? Trottin' off in the storm when I thought ye wuz in thar a sleepin'.

EMMY. Why, Mis' Cagle—

MRS. CAGLE. Up to some o' yo' tricks again. Puttin' things in yo' bed to make me believe it's ye.

SHERIFF (*striding toward the back door.*) Yes, Miss Emmy, whut did you put in your bed? Let's pull it out and see.

EMMY. Why Mis' Cagle—

(MRS. CAGLE *shakes her head at* EMMY *who seems to realize that something is expected of her. With her gun in her hand* MRS. CAGLE *follows the* SHERIFF *to the door.*)

EMMY. 'Pears to me like ye air mighty much at home, Jim Weeks.

SHERIFF (*from inside of back room.*) Let's see who else makes hisself at home. (MRS. CAGLE *steps to one side of the door, and is about to lift her gun when the* SHERIFF *appears in the doorway holding up a big feather bolster. He laughs.*) Well, Miss Emmy, that's one on me, unless—

BOB. (*Coming down ladder.*) Nothin' alive up thar but rats.

SHERIFF. Well look whut wuz in bed, Bob. Better come and look under the bed agin.

BOB. (*Taking the bolster and going into the back room.*) All right.

SHERIFF. How's your pap, Miss Emmy?

EMMY. He's gittin' better tonight.

BOB. (*Entering.*) Nothin' under thar except these here pertaters. (*Slips the potatoes he holds into his pocket.*)

SHERIFF. All right. Well that bolster, Miss Emmy, is a pretty good joke on me and Mis' Cagle both.

EMMY. Yes—

SHERIFF. I'm powerful sorry, Mis' Cagle, that I had to 'pear to doubt your word. It wuz one of them things that has to b done now and then.

MRS. CAGLE. Well, I hope ye air satisfied And now if ye be through searchin', reckon ye kin go. I ain't got nothin agin ye, Jim Weeks, but I ain't power ful fond of yo' job. When ye come an ain't representin' the law, ye're wel come. When ye air, ye ain't. (*Movin to fireplace.*)

SHERIFF. (*Going to door.* BOB *follow him.*) All right, Mis' Cagle. If didn't know you so well, I'd shore think you wuz a moonshin'.

MRS. CAGLE. I would be if it warn't s cold that the mash would freeze.

SHERIFF. (*Laughing as he goes out th door.*) Goodnight, Mis' Cagle. Good night, Miss Emmy.

(*The door closes and* MRS. CAGLE *bar it.*)

EMMY. What's up, Mis' Cagle?

MRS. CAGLE. (*Listening at outside door and then going to the back room door an looking in.*) Thar wuz a furriner com here. He wuz young like Rufe. H was a runnin' from the law. I put hin in bed, and told the Sheriff hit wuz y I reckon he must a slipped through th winder, but I don't see how he done it

EMMY. He won't have no chance outsid in this storm.

MRS. CAGLE. I cain't see how that felle got outen that room.

EMMY. Maybe he ain't out. Maybe he' hid.

MRS. CAGLE. 'Tain't no place fer him t hide.

EMMY. Under the bed?

MRS. CAGLE. The Sheriff made sure h warn't under thar. I reckon he must squirmed through that window hole, bu he shore didn't look little 'nough fe that. Wharever he is, God help hin (*Going toward fire.* EMMY *follows her.* Yo' pap sobered up yet, Emmy?

EMMY. Yes'um, he's 'bout over it. Swear he won't never tech 'nother drap.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I reckon he won't tec 'nother drop, but he won't mind techin a quart or two.

EMMY. Bud said ye had a letter, Mis Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, and I'm powerful anx ious to hear it, but ye eat yo' suppe first, and then ye kin read Rufe's letter (*She sits down and lights her pipe.*)

EMMY. Let's read the letter first.

MRS. CAGLE. No, he's well, or he wouldn'

a wrote. Yo' supper is a gittin' plum dried up and ruined, whut the stranger didn't eat of it.

TRANGER. (*Appearing in back room door.*) I hope I left you enough to eat.

MMY. (*Takes plate and sits on floor before fire at* MRS. CAGLE'S *feet. Looks up frightened.*) Oh—yes—plenty.

RS. CAGLE. (*Turning towards him. Does not show any surprise.*) Thar's plenty. Emmy ain't a big eater. Whar wuz ye?

TRANGER. Under the potato pile. There was a lull in the storm, and I happened to hear your daughter's footsteps as she came up to the house. I thought that would mean another search, so I put the bolster in the bed, and was about to crawl under it when I spied the potato pile in the corner. So, I got behind it, and pulled the potatoes over me.

RS. CAGLE. Mighty lucky fer ye. I thought he wuz about to git ye. I wuz already to shoot.

TRANGER. You would have shot to save me from arrest?

RS. CAGLE. I promised that I'd hide ye, didn't I? Besides, I'd like to shoot at Jim Weeks.

TRANGER. But I didn't expect that much protection. I don't know how to thank you.

RS. CAGLE. Ye air welcome, Stranger, as long as ye air honest, and I reckon ye air if ye ain't done nothin' worse than run away from war. Pull ye up a chair, and set down.

TRANGER. (*Sitting down on the bench beside the table.*) Perhaps it wasn't an honest thing to do, but there were circumstances—

RS. CAGLE. I don't understand ye.

TRANGER. I mean it was a bit unusual. I was drafted and—

RS. CAGLE. They forced ye to go to war?

TRANGER. Yes, I'm ashamed to say.

RS. CAGLE. Didn't ye try to protect yo'self?

TRANGER. You don't understand. I'm ashamed that I didn't go like your son—of my own free will.

RS. CAGLE. Wuz yo' maw agin yo' goin'?

TRANGER. She took it very hard. But I suppose it was because I whined around so. If I'd been more of a man she wouldn't have felt so badly about it.

RS. CAGLE. Does she know ye air a comin' home?

TRANGER. No, I was home on leave last week. Yesterday I got a letter from my sister saying that Mother had been crying ever since I left. I kept thinking about it, and brooding over it, and last night we got word that we were to start for France in two or three days. And when I thought what that message would mean to her, I just couldn't stand it. I ran away. I didn't have much money. I couldn't ride. I bought these clothes to hide my uniform. I intended to walk home, but the storm was so terrible—

MMY. Ye got a wife?

TRANGER. No. I had a sweetheart, but she threw me over when she learned that—I was afraid.

RS. CAGLE. Afeered of gittin' shot, Stranger.

TRANGER. Yes, I was—

RS. CAGLE. Well, thar air many a thing that's worse. Being afeered is worse.

TRANGER. Yes, I am beginning to realize that.

MMY. Rufe wuzn't afeered.

RS. CAGLE. No, my boy ain't afeered o' hell. I didn't want him to go, 'cose I couldn't see no use of it. But I warn't sayin' nothin' agin him goin' when he though hit wuz right.

MMY. He said it wuz to pertect his hills, and his home, and his wimen folks.

RS. CAGLE. He mought a thought so, but I calculate his hills don't need no pertectin', and I reckon his wimen folks kin pertect themselves.

TRANGER. (*Turning to* EMMY.) Your husband was right. (*To* MRS. CAGLE.) You're wrong, Mrs. Cagle. That's your name, isn't it?

RS. CAGLE. Yes, that's my name.

TRANGER. I hope you'll pardon me for contradicting you, but you and all other women couldn't do anything against the enemy your son is fighting.

RS. CAGLE. Men folks is always seein' some terrible thing ahead.

TRANGER. It's not the coward speaking now, Mrs. Cagle. It's the man who knows.

RS. CAGLE. My maw told me when they fought the other war, they wuz allus a skeerin' 'em, and a tellin' 'em about the Yankees a comin'. They did come to some places, but Maw never seed one. She wuzn't afeered then, and I

ain't askeered of no Yankee nohow.

STRANGER. You mean German.

MRS. CAGLE. Call 'em whut you want to. They'll allus be Yankees to me.

STRANGER. But Mrs. Cagle, it's not the Yankees this time. That war's over long ago. In this war the Yank and the Rebel are fighting together.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye mean they air fightin' on the same side, Stranger?

STRANGER. Yes, side by side.

MRS. CAGLE. Who air they fightin', Stranger?

STRANGER. The Germans.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon they've come 'long since my time. I never heared of 'em. Whut's it over, Stranger?

STRANGER. Well, for one thing to protect our country.

EMMY. That's whut Rufe said, Mis' Cagle. He knowed.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, I heared him, but I didn't think the boy knowed so much. I heared him say this country belonged to us 'cose God A'mighty let us be born here. He said this land had brung us up, and nursed us—kinder pretty speech for a boy like Rufe, ain't it, Stranger?

STRANGER. Yes. He is right.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Taking the envelope from her bosom and handing it to* EMMY.) Read his letter, Emmy. Rufe could allus write sech nice letters. I reckon ye won't mind hearing it, Stranger?

STRANGER. (*Rising. With some uneasiness.*) No. (*Moves back of table.*)

EMMY. (*Rising. Looking at the letter.*) Why Mis' Cagle your name is printed. (*Goes to the lantern and looks at the envelope closely.* MRS. CAGLE *follows and looks over her shoulder.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Read the inside, Emmy.

EMMY. (*Cries out.*) 'Tain't from Rufe, Mom. 'Tain't from him.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Fiercely.*) Who's it from?

EMMY. I cain't read it. I cain't read it.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Taking the letter from the girl and staring at it.*) Great God, why didn't ye l'arn me how to read? (*Hands letter back to* EMMY.) Spell it out, Emmy. Maybe the stranger kin help ye. He kin read a little.

EMMY. (*Sobbing as she takes the letter. The* STRANGER *starts forward as if to take the letter, but stops.*) I'm so afeered—

STRANGER. I'll help you.

EMMY. (*Spells out a letter or two and then speaks the name.*) M-r-s—I—That's yo' name. Mis' Liza Cagle. We r-e-g-r-e-t—

STRANGER. That means—are sorry.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Repeating.*) We air sorry—

EMMY. To i-n-f-o-r-m—

STRANGER. That means—to tell—

MRS. CAGLE. We air sorry to tell—

EMMY. You—that—your—son, Rufe Cagle, d-i-e-d—

MRS. CAGLE. (*Speaking before the* STRANGER. *She stands erect, and rigid, but does not evidence any great emotion otherwise.*) DIED—

EMMY. (*Sobbing as she sinks to a chair.*) O, Mom, Mom—

STRANGER. (*Taking the telegram from her hand and reading.*) February fifth, in action. That means he died—fighting.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Very calmly, but with deep emotion.*) It means my boy is dead. It means the law's got my boy same as his pap.

ACT THREE

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *The same as Scene One. A few hours later. Early morning.*

The stage is dark except for the glow that comes from the fireplace. A figure sits near the fire. It stirs the fire. A brighter glow comes forth. A frying pan or two and a coffee pot are shifted as if a breakfast already prepared is being kept warm. Outside the crow of a rooster is heard several times. The figure of MRS. CAGLE *arises, and goes to the window. She opens the wooden shutter; the faint glimmer of approaching dawn slips in.*

MRS. CAGLE. (*Going and shaking a figure that is lying on the bed.*) Emmy—Emmy. Wake up, Emmy. (*Going to the back room door.*) Git up, Stranger. (*Knocking on door.*) Air ye awake, Stranger?

STRANGER. (*From the back room.*) Yes, Mrs. Cagle.

(*A sob comes from* EMMY'S *bed.*)

MRS. CAGLE. (*Going to bed and speaking kindly.*) Git up, Emmy. Hit's daybreak—at last. (*Goes slowly back to fireplace and sits down.* EMMY, *fully dressed, gets up and comes to the fire.*)

EMMY. O, Mom, I dreamt hit warn't so. I thought that Rufe had come back. (*She sobs softly.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Dreams is a heap o' comfort, sometimes, Emmy. But hit's the wakin' up—

EMMY. Did ye dream too, Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. No, not exactly.

EMMY. Did ye lay down, Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. No, I jest sot here and kept a thinkin'.

EMMY. Ye oughter let me set up with ye, Mom.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I wuz a thinkin'. Seemed to me like Rufe wuz a little boy agin. Seemed to me like hit couldn't be so that he'd growed up, and gone off, and wuzn't a comin' back. Hit seemed to me that he must be little agin, and a sleepin' thar in the bed, and me a settin' up with him sick. I jest kept awaitin' fer him to cry out so's I could take him up in my lap.

EMMY. O, Mom, maybe thar's some mistake.

MRS. CAGLE. No, thar ain't no mistake. I kin remember when he used to stump his toe, or hurt hisself, I'd feel the pain as much as him. And jest like he wuz little agin, somew'eres in here (*clutches her breast*) I kin feel the hurt of a bullet. Jest like when he wuz little, and had hurt hisself.

EMMY. O, Mom, hit's a killin' me, but I'm proud of him. He done whut he thought wuz right.

MRS. CAGLE. Yes. Better call the stranger agin, Emmy. Breakfast will be all spoilt.

STRANGER. (*Entering.*) I'm up, Mrs. Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Putting food on the table.*) Set down and eat, Stranger. Come, Emmy. Hit's almost sun-up.

(*All sit down. The* STRANGER *eats.* EMMY *makes an attempt, but fails.* MRS. CAGLE *does not eat.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Try to eat, Emmy. I reckon ye'll need yo' strength to git through the day.

EMMY. Ye must eat, too, Mom.

MRS. CAGLE. I et while I wuz a cookin'. Have ye made your plans, stranger?

STRANGER. Yes, Mrs. Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. Which way ye travelin'?

STRANGER. I'm going—back to the camp.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye ain't afeered?

STRANGER. No, Mrs. Cagle, I'm not afraid.

MRS. CAGLE. Air ye thinkin' of yo' ma?

STRANGER. Yes. I want my mother to have the same right to this land that you have.

MRS. CAGLE. Hit air a costly right.

STRANGER. Yes.

MRS. CAGLE. Well, if ye air sot on goin', Stranger, when ye shoot, remember Rufe, and all the other mothers' sons like him.

STRANGER. I will, Mrs. Cagle. You've made me ashamed. I'm going back. I hope I get there before I am arrested. I want them to know that I wanted to come back.

MRS. CAGLE. I'll put ye up a snack to eat on the way, and I reckon ye better wear one o' Rufe's old hats and his coat.

STRANGER. You are very kind, but I don't like to take your son's things now. If you can lend me just a hat, or a cap—

MRS. CAGLE. Ye air goin' to shoot the dogs that killed him, ain't ye?

STRANGER. Yes.

MRS. CAGLE. Then ye air welcome to his coat too.

STRANGER. Thank you. (MRS. CAGLE *goes into the back room.*) I can never repay you for all your kindness.

EMMY. I hope ye come back.

STRANGER. I hope so, but I can't help thinking of the injustice of things. Your husband had so much to come back to— He went like a man, while I—

EMMY. I'd a loved him jest the same even if he'd bin afeered.

STRANGER. (*Studying her closely.*) I reckon you would have. Perhaps—after all—it's women like you who keep men from being afraid.

MRS. CAGLE. (*From the back room.*) Emmy—

EMMY. (*Springing up and going toward door.*) Yes'um?

(*The* STRANGER *rises and watches* EMMY *with an admiration that is akin to reverence. His lips move as one who dreams of a thing that might be. He shakes his head slowly, and sits down.*)

MRS. CAGLE. (*From the back room.*) Ain't none o' them paper bags saved?

EMMY. Yes'um, thar's one on the shelf thar.

MRS. CAGLE. Here they air.

EMMY. (*Coming back.*) Kin I give ye some more coffee, Stranger?

STRANGER. (*Rising.*) No thank you.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Entering with paper bag in*

hand which she proceeds to fill with food at table.) Eat a plenty, Stranger.

STRANGER. I have, thank you.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon ye better be goin' by good sun-up.

STRANGER. Yes, as soon as possible.

(*There is a loud knocking at the door. All are startled. The man springs up, frightened.*)

EMMY. I reckon that's Bud a comin'.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon hit is, but ye better hide, Stranger.

STRANGER. Hadn't I better stay and face it?

MRS. CAGLE. No, ye kin hide in the back room.

(*The* STRANGER *goes into the back room.* EMMY *opens door. The* SHERIFF *enters.*)

SHERIFF. Good morning, Miss Emmy. Good morning, Widow Cagle.

EMMY. Come in, Sheriff.

MRS. CAGLE. Good mornin', Sheriff.

SHERIFF. Kinder cleared off this morning. Storm is over, but it shore is cold. Mind me warmin'?

MRS. CAGLE. No. Pull ye up a chair.

SHERIFF. (*Going to the fire, looking the table over.*) I'm kinder early, but I see you got company for breakfast.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking at the third plate.*) Yes, I've got company.

SHERIFF. Reckon he must a come a'ter I left last night.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Ignoring the* SHERIFF.) I reckon ye can clear up the table, Emmy, and I'll bring in a little more wood.

EMMY. Yes, Mom. I'll bring in the wood, too, if ye kin wait.

SHERIFF. I said I reckon your company come last night a'ter I left.

MRS. CAGLE. No, he got here last night jest before ye did.

SHERIFF. Where wuz he?

MRS. CAGLE. Under the tater pile.

SHERIFF. I kinder thought so. Well, I'm mighty sorry to disobleege you, or your company, Mis' Cagle, but law is law.

MRS. CAGLE. Don't ye know no other word but law, Jim Weeks? Why don't ye put yo' law to some use? If ye want to fight, why don't ye go fight like Rufe? Ain't ye fitten to use yo' law again' nothin' but wimen, and men folks whut's without guns?

SHERIFF. Now, Mis' Cagle, all this talk ain't going to soften my heart to let this here deserter go—

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't tryin' to soften yo' heart. Ye air goin' to let the stranger go. He ain't no deserter. He ain't nothin' more than a boy. He wuz homesick, and he is a goin' back to war this mornin'.

SHERIFF. But Mis' Cagle, I'm obleeged to—

MRS. CAGLE. Ye ain't a goin' to tech him, Jim Weeks.

SHERIFF. Well, now, Mis' Cagle, me and your son had some differences, of course, but a'ter all I ain't got nothin' agin Rufe.

MRS. CAGLE. Whut's Rufe got to do with it?

SHERIFF. Well, there ain't no use of you denying that Rufe's run away, and come home.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking at him in amazement.* EMMY *bursts into tears.* MRS. CAGLE *speaks very quietly.*) Rufe? No, Sheriff, Rufe ain't come home. (*She throws a shawl over her head and goes out the front door.* SHERIFF *goes toward* EMMY *and makes an effort to comfort her.*)

SHERIFF. Now, Miss Emmy, don't take hit so hard. I'd most rather give up my job than to make you cry. Of course, Rufe took the woman I loved, but I ain't a holdin' that agin him. I calculated he wuz the best man to do it, but this here is a case of where I have to do my duty. If he will come out and give hisself up, and don't make no trouble, why fer yo' sake I'll do whut I can fer him. Whar is he?

EMMY. Whar is he? He is a lyin' dead out thar on the battlefield whar he wuz a fightin'.

SHERIFF. (*With great surprise.*) Rufe ain't dead?

EMMY. Yes, Mom got the letter last night.

SHERIFF. I'm sorry. They didn't tell me the name and I didn't look at the warrant. I thought this here deserter wuz him. Mis' Cagle didn't say nothin' to me— I wisht him better luck than that.

EMMY. (*Angrily.*) I don't believe ye. Ye come here to take him to jail. I know ye did, and if he'd a bin here instead of this poor boy that is—if he'd a come to see me and Mom instead o' dyin', ye would a took him, ye would.

SHERIFF. But Miss Emmy—

EMMY. Ye would a took him to jail jest because ye had the power. Once last summer I thought I'd marry ye instead of Rufe, because I kinder looked up to ye as standin' for whut was right. I

thought ye wuz brave, but that day Rufe registered I come to know that Rufe wuz the man that wuzn't askeered. (*Breaks into a sob.*)

(MRS. CAGLE *and* BUD *enter.* BUD *carries an armful of wood, which he places on the floor by the fireplace.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Come in, Bud.

BUD. Howdy, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. Good mornin', Bud.

BUD. (*Noticing* EMMY'S *emotion.*) Whut's the matter, Emmy? Whut's he done to ye?

SHERIFF. Miss Emmy's bin tellin' me 'bout Rufe, Mis' Cagle. I'm mighty sorry.

BUD. Rufe?

MRS. CAGLE. Hush, Bud.

BUD. Whar's Rufe?

SHERIFF. They tell me, Bud, that Rufe's dead.

BUD. Rufe dead? 'Tain't so. 'Tain't so. Yisterday—yisterday—I—I—

EMMY. Yes, Bud, Rufe's dead.

BUD. 'Tain't so, 'tain't so. Why yisterday, yisterday I brung the letter.

MRS. CAGLE. That letter told us, Bud.

BUD. (*To* SHERIFF.) Rufe's dead! I want to go to war. Bin shootin' since I could hold a gun. People think I'm foolish in the head. Don't talk much. Took a'ter Maw. Two years 'fore I wuz born she didn't talk. Didn't have nobody to talk to. Pap wuz allus drunk. I kin do whut I'm told to do. I kin read. Kin I go to war?

MRS. CAGLE. No, Bud.

BUD. Rufe's kilt, Mis' Cagle. I got to go. Sheriff, will ye take keer o' my wimen folks?

MRS. CAGLE. Ye don't know whut ye takin' 'bout, Bud. This ain't no feud whar ye have a chance. Hit air murder, and the law air back of hit.

SHERIFF. Mis' Cagle's got it wrong, Bud, but thar ain't no use o' yo' goin' till they call ye.

MRS. CAGLE. They won't call Bud.

SHERIFF. I'm mighty sorry 'bout Rufe, Mis' Cagle, and I'm powerful sorry to force the law at a time like this, but I'm obleeged to take this here deserter to headquarters.

MRS. CAGLE. Sheriff, the law ain't never took nobody outen my house.

SHERIFF. Then ye admit that this deserter is hid here?

MRS. CAGLE. Yes, he's hid in the back room.

SHERIFF. (*Starting toward the back room door and then stopping. After a moment's pause he turns back.*) All right, Mis' Cagle. Outen respect to you in yo' trouble I'll jest wait outside fer him. My deputies wuz to be here at sun-up. We'll surround the house. Thar ain't no use of him tryin' to git away. If he's a man he'll come out and give hisself up.

MRS. CAGLE. A man ain't givin' hisself up to the law.

SHERIFF. (*Becoming irritated.*) Now, Mis' Cagle, I'm a hatin' to say these things to you, when you're in trouble, but last night you harbored a deserter. That's the same as givin' aid to the enemy. Fer that thing I kin throw ye into jail today. I ain't a wantin' to do hit, but I'll have to if you interfere any further with the law.

MRS. CAGLE. I've bin a breakin' the law fer nigh on to forty year, and I ain't afeered to break it again.

SHERIFF. Well, I warn ye. If you make another move to help this deserter git away I'll arrest ye, Mis' Cagle, and take ye to prison. (*He goes toward door, and then stops.*) I'll wait outside, Mis' Cagle. (*He goes out.*)

BUD. (*Half sobbing.*) Rufe's dead.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Following to door and barring it.*) Call the stranger, Emmy.

EMMY. Whut ye goin' to do, Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. We air goin' to fight, Emmy. (*Gets gun.*)

EMMY. No, no, Mom, no.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Ignoring* EMMY *she goes toward the back room door and calls.*) Stranger! Come out, stranger.

STRANGER. (*Entering.*) Mrs. Cagle, I can't hide behind you all any longer. I'll give myself up.

MRS. CAGLE. No, Stranger, we air goin' to take our stand agin' the law.

EMMY. (*Looking out the window.*) They air comin', Mom, the deputies.

MRS. CAGLE. Come away from that window, Emmy.

EMMY. Thar air three of 'em, Mom, and Jim Weeks is a puttin' 'em around the house.

MRS. CAGLE. Thar air four of us. Stranger, kin ye shoot?

STRANGER. No, no, Mrs. Cagle. I'm not worth that. I'm ashamed that I hid last night. I should have been a man and given myself up then.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye call hit bein' a man givin' yo'self up without a fight?

STRANGER. What chance have we against the law? If we open fire on these officers it will mean that we all will be tried on a more serious charge. I alone am guilty— Let me take the consequences. Please, Mrs. Cagle.

MRS. CAGLE. I told ye I'd hide ye, Stranger.

STRANGER. You did, and I thank you. But to fight like this, Mrs. Cagle, it's all wrong.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking at him closely.*) Ye ain't afeered air ye?

STRANGER. (*Hesitating, and showing something of the fear in himself.*) Maybe. I tell you what I'll do. I'll watch my chance, and run for it—

MRS. CAGLE. They'll git ye in the back.

STRANGER. (*Peering out the window.*) No, I can make it. Miss Emmy, you go out for wood and leave the door open. I'll take my chance and make for that clump of trees out there.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye air foolish, Stranger.

EMMY. (*Still watching at window.*) Mom, Jim Weeks is a comin' to the house.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Hurrying toward window, points toward the back room.*) Go back, Stranger.

STRANGER. What's the use? They've got me.

MRS. CAGLE. (*With the determination of a command.*) Go back.

(*The* STRANGER *pauses for a moment. His fear gets the better of him and he turns and goes hurriedly into the back room.*)

SHERIFF. (*Trying door and finding it barred, calls.*) Mis' Cagle, open up. I want to speak to ye.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye kin talk through the door.

SHERIFF. I ain't after botherin' ye, Mis' Cagle. I've got news fer ye.

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't wantin' yo' news.

SHERIFF. I give ye my word, Mis' Cagle, to speak to ye and come right out. You'll be powerful interested in whut I got to say.

EMMY. Maybe the Sheriff ain't going to take him, Mom.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Lifting gun and coming toward center of room.*) Open the door, Emmy!

(EMMY *opens the door and the* SHERIFF *enters.*)

SHERIFF. No use for gun play, Mis' Cagle. I ain't after touchin' ye. (*He comes close to her and speaks in a low voice.*) My deputies have jest come, and they brung me the name of this here deserter. (*He takes a paper from inside pocket.*) Hit mought be interestin' for ye to know who it is ye air riskin' yo' own liberty to hide.

MRS. CAGLE. In my house, Jim Weeks, we ask no man his name.

SHERIFF. In this case it mought have been better if yer had. (*He reads from paper in low voice.*) This is a warrant for the arrest of Zeb Turner, J-r.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Repeats.*) Zeb Turner? (*Pause. She shakes her head.*) No, ye air wrong, Sheriff. Zeb Turner air old. The stranger ain't more than a boy.

SHERIFF. Yes, Mis' Cagle, but this is Zeb Turner, Junior. That means—son of—Zeb Turner.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Rigid with emotion.*) Ye mean this boy air—the son—of my man's murderer?

SHERIFF. Yes—this deserter—the same.

MRS. CAGLE. The son of Zeb Turner—

SHERIFF. Now, I'll leave it to yo' judgment, Mis' Cagle, if ye hadn't better jes turn him out to me.

MRS. CAGLE. (*Looking at the back room door and then studying the* SHERIFF *closely.*) Air ye—lyin' to me, Jim Weeks?

SHERIFF. No, and if ye don't believe me let Miss Emmy read this— (*He turns toward* EMMY *with paper in hand.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Read it, Emmy.

SHERIFF. (*Pointing.*) Right here, Miss Emmy.

EMMY. (*Spelling the words out.*) Z-e-b Zeb T-u-r-n-e-r—

SHERIFF. That spells Turner. (*Taking the warrant from her.*) Ain't that right, Miss Emmy?

EMMY. Yes, sir.

SHERIFF. Now, Mis' Cagle, if ye air satisfied, I reckon I can take my prisoner.

MRS. CAGLE. (*After a moment's hesitation.*) No, Sheriff, ye kin wait—outside.

SHERIFF. All right, as ye say. If ye need me, jest call. (*Satisfied with his triumph he goes out—smiling.*)

EMMY. (*Coming forward.*) Who is he Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. (*Standing erect and making no move except to push* EMMY *aside. She stares straight at the back room door and when she speaks it is to herself rather than in answer to* EMMY'S *questions.*) I fed him—

MMY. Whut's happened?
RS. CAGLE. And I hid him—
MMY. Tell me whut's up, Mom.
RS. CAGLE. I wuz about to shoot to save him—
MMY. Mom, who is he?
RS. CAGLE. The son of the man who killed Rufe's pap.
MMY. (*Greatly agitated.*) Son of the—man who—killed—Rufe's pap!
RS. CAGLE. If his pap had lived Rufe wouldn't a gone to war.
UD. (*Concerned only with his grief.*) Rufe's dead.
RS. CAGLE. Yes, Bud, Rufe's dead, and one of his murderers air in thar—
MMY. Ye goin' to give him to the law, Mom?
RS. CAGLE. (*With some hesitation.*) No—not to—the law.
MMY. (*With uneasiness.*) Whut ye goin' to do, Mom?
RS. CAGLE. (*Suddenly turns and going to the door, bars it. Coming back to the table she takes the gun in her hand. She stands for a few seconds staring at the back room door.* BUD *pays no attention to her.* EMMY *watches, too confounded for words or action.* MRS. CAGLE *finally moves toward the door, slowly, but firm in step. She stops for a second at the door, and then in a quiet but commanding voice speaks.*) Come out, Stranger.
STRANGER. (*Entering he feels the tenseness of the scene.*) Has the—Sheriff gone?
MRS. CAGLE. Ye air safe from the Sheriff.
STRANGER. Thank God.
MRS. CAGLE. Yo' name, Stranger.
STRANGER. My name is Zeb Turner.
MRS. CAGLE. And yo' pap's name? Wuz hit Zeb Turner, too?
STRANGER. Yes, Zeb Turner.
MRS. CAGLE. Wuz he a revenuer?
STRANGER. Yes, one of the bravest that ever crossed the mountains. You don't know him, do you?
MRS. CAGLE. Know him? Well, Stranger, Zeb Turner killed my son's pap.
STRANGER. Great God!
MRS. CAGLE. Shot him in the back while he wuz a protectin' his own property.
STRANGER. God Almighty!
MRS. CAGLE. And I've protected ye—
STRANGER. I didn't know, Mrs. Cagle, I—
MRS. CAGLE. Hid ye in my own house—ye, the son of my man's murderer.
STRANGER. I didn't know. Besides, you've got to remember, it was law.
MRS. CAGLE. Law! Law! Allus that word, law. Well, Stranger, the feud has a law, and it air a life for a life.
STRANGER. I understand how you feel, and I don't blame you. Call the Sheriff and give me up.
MRS. CAGLE. Give ye up? No, Stranger, ye air mine to deal with.
EMMY. Mom!
STRANGER. Mrs. Cagle, for your own sake, turn me over to the Sheriff. I'll get what's coming to me.
MRS. CAGLE. If ye've got a gun, Stranger, use hit. The feud will give ye a chance,—the law won't.
STRANGER. I have no gun.
MRS. CAGLE. Thar's Bud's. I'll give ye time to reach hit.
STRANGER. Why, I can't fight you, Mrs. Cagle.
MRS. CAGLE. I'm givin' ye a chance.
STRANGER. I can't take it.
MRS. CAGLE. Then ye better run—
STRANGER. They will take your life for this. (*Shows his fear of her.*)
MRS. CAGLE My life! Whut does that matter? They've took every life that belonged to me. My pap's—my man's—my son's—my little son's life, they took hit, them that hide behind a thing called law.
STRANGER. But Mrs. Cagle, you don't understand—
MRS. CAGLE. I understand that ye air a son of the law, and that ye air in the power of the feud.
STRANGER. (*Pleadingly.*) Mrs. Cagle—
MRS. CAGLE. I'm offerin' ye a chance fer yo' life, but if ye air too much of a coward to take hit, by God I'll— (*Throws the gun to her shoulder.*)
EMMY. (*Throwing herself between* MRS. CAGLE *and* STRANGER.) Mom, ye shan't kill him, ye shan't.
MRS. CAGLE. Git away, Emmy.
EMMY. Mom, he's goin' out thar to shoot the dogs that killed Rufe—
MRS. CAGLE. I ain't a believin' him.
EMMY. Him and Rufe was a fightin' on the same side—
MRS. CAGLE. Out of the way, Emmy—
EMMY. Mom, he cain't help whut his pap done.
MRS. CAGLE. He's a son of the law. Air ye forgettin' whut the law done to yo' pap?
EMMY. My pap wuz a breakin' the law.

MRS. CAGLE. Air ye fergettin' that the law killed Rufe?

EMMY. No, Mom, I ain't a fergettin' ever. But hit warn't the law, Mom, hit wuz hate—Rufe told me—hate like this thing in yo' heart toward him— (*Pointing to* STRANGER.) Fer somethin' he got nothing to do with. It's hate, Mom. Rufe told me the day he went off— (*She breaks into hysterical sobs.*) Rufe told me—

(*Suddenly* MRS. CAGLE *seems to be listening intently to something the others do not hear.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Hush, did ye hear that?

EMMY. Whut, mom?

MRS. CAGLE. (*Listening.*) Hit's music.

EMMY. Hit's the wind on the snow—

MRS. CAGLE. Hush, I tell ye. Hit's him— (*Pause.*) Cain't ye hear him?

(*The* STRANGER *and* EMMY *exchange glances as much as to say that she has gone mad.*)

EMMY. Who, Mom?

MRS. CAGLE. Wait— (*There is a pause—dead silence.*) Yes, son—

EMMY. Mom, whut is hit?

MRS. CAGLE. Be quiet, I tell ye. Whut is it, son?—yes—yes— (*She turns to the others, listening as she speaks.*) Cain't ye hear him speakin'?

EMMY. No, Mom.

MRS. CAGLE. (*After a pause.*) Say hit again, son, so's I kin tell them. (*There is a moment's pause, and then* MRS. CAGLE *repeats in a measured voice.*) As long as thar air hate—thar will be—feuds. As long as thar air women—thar will be—sons. I ain't no more—to you—than other mothers' sons—air to them. Yes, son—whut else? (*Pause.*) Take keer of—yo'self—yes, son—and Emmy. Whut else, son?— (*She strains to hear more but it does not come. She turns to the others.*) Didn't none of ye hear him speakin'?

EMMY. No, Mom. We didn't hear him.

MRS. CAGLE. I heared him.

EMMY. Ye must a thought ye heared him.

MRS. CAGLE. I heared him jest as plain.

EMMY. The dead cain't come back.

MRS. CAGLE. No, I reckon my love went on—out yonder and reached him (*the gun slips to the floor*) and he's told me whut to do. I reckon ye better go, Stranger.

STRANGER. You mean—

MRS. CAGLE. I mean the hate of the feud air gone out of me— Go home, boy, if ye kin.

STRANGER. No, I'm going back to the camp. I'll come back sometime and thank you.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon if ye put on Bud's coat and cap and pull hit over your face, Jim Weeks will think hits Bud, and let ye go.

STRANGER. But you—what will he do to you?

MRS. CAGLE. Nothin', Stranger. I ain't afeered and, thar ain't no danger unless ye air afeered.

(EMMY *takes* BUD'S *coat and cap from him and hands them quickly to the* STRANGER. He puts them on.)

STRANGER. I'll go.

MRS. CAGLE. Ye better take my gun. Ye might need it.

STRANGER. (*Taking gun.*) Good-by, Mrs. Cagle. If you don't mind—I'll come back some day and thank you.

MRS. CAGLE. I ain't a mindin', Stranger.

EMMY. (*At the window.*) Now's yo' chance.

STRANGER. Good-by— (*He shakes hands with* EMMY.)

MRS. CAGLE. Hurry. (STRANGER *goes quickly out.*)

EMMY. (*Still watching at window.*) Jim Weeks is a turnin'—

MRS. CAGLE. Maybe not, Emmy.

EMMY. No, no—he's passed him, Mom. (*Still watches.*) He's—passed—Jim Weeks.

MRS. CAGLE. (*As if to herself, unconscious of* EMMY'S *presence.*) As long as thar is hate thar will be feuds—and wars—

EMMY. He's safe, Mom. He air down past the woods, and Jim Weeks air watchin' the house.

MRS. CAGLE. He'll make hit through the woods.

EMMY. Oh, I hope he does.

MRS. CAGLE. I reckon, ye better take Papy Todd a little breakfast.

EMMY. Yes'um, I will. (*She comes away from the window and goes to cupboard. She takes a tin bucket which she fills with food at the table.* MRS. CAGLE *takes the broom and sweeps floor around the hearth. Knocks are heard at the door.*)

MRS. CAGLE. Bud, see who that is cain't open the door fer hisself. (BUD *opens the door and the* SHERIFF *enters. He is dumbfounded when he sees* BUD.)

ERIFF. Well, I'll be doggoned.
RS. CAGLE. The stranger's gone, Sheriff.
ERIFF. You let *him* go?
RS. CAGLE. He air a mother's son, Sheriff.
ERIFF. Well, I warned ye, Mis' Cagle.
RS. CAGLE. I'm ready to go to jail.
ERIFF. All right, come along.
(*Unseen by the others* BUD *draws his gun and covers the* SHERIFF.—*The* SHERIFF *is unconscious of his danger.*)
MMY. No, no, Sheriff, please—
RS. CAGLE. Ye kin stay at yo' pap's, Emmy. Ye kin sell the place. Jim Weeks will buy hit.
MMY. Sell the place? But, Mom, whut would ye do when ye come back?
RS. CAGLE. I reckon these here hills that borned me, and nursed me kin take keer of me fer a little while.
MMY. Sheriff, ain't ye rememberin' yo' own ma? Ain't thar no love in yo' heart that can make ye see why Mom done this?
HERIFF. Duty, Miss Emmy, is a hard thing but thar must be some of us to carry hit out.
RS. CAGLE. (*Wrapping herself in a large shawl.*) Emmy, ye kin move my things down to yo' pap's— (*She goes to the door where* RUFE'S *hoe stands and caresses the handle.*) And—don't ye fergit—Rufe's hoe—Emmy. (*She looks about the room as if taking a farewell.*) I'm ready—Sheriff.
HERIFF. (*Looking at her, he shakes his head, and lowers it as if ashamed. As he goes out he says somewhat brokenly.*) Well, not now—Mis' Cagle, not—now.

(BUD *slowly puts the gun back in his pocket.*)
EMMY. O Mom!
MRS. CAGLE. Ye go ahead, Emmy, with yo' pap's breakfast, and I'll dig the snow outen the yard, before the Sheriff gits back.
EMMY. (*Almost in tears.*) He ain't a comin' back, Mom.
MRS. CAGLE. Maybe not, Emmy. I ain't afeered, nohow.
EMMY. Air ye all right, Mom?
MRS. CAGLE. Yes, Emmy.
EMMY. (*Throwing her shawl over her shoulders and head.*) I'll be back soon.
MRS. CAGLE. I reckon you'd better do the wash to-day, hit's blowed up so fair hit won't take the clothes no time to dry.
EMMY. Yes, Mom. (*Taking the pail from the table and going out.*) I won't be long. Come, Bud. (*They go out.* BUD *takes* RUFE'S *coat and throws it around him as he goes out.*)
MRS. CAGLE. (*Drawing her shawl over her head again, and stopping at the door, fingers* RUFE'S *hoe. Once more she listens, but hearing no voice, speaks.*) I heared ye, Rufe. I never knowed nothin' about lovin' anything but ye—till ye showed me hit's lovin' them all that counts. Hit wuz sundown when ye left me, son—(*the morning sun, just rising, comes in through the window*) but hit's sun-up now, and I'm a knowin' God A'mighty is a takin' keer of ye—Rufe. (*She opens the door and the sun floods in. With the hoe in her hand she goes out quietly, and closes the door behind her.*)

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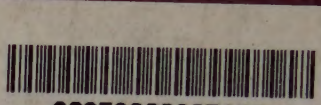
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